



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council held on Thursday 23rd May 2024 held at Lapley and Wheaton Aston village hall.

In attendance:

Cllr W Millington	Wheaton Aston (Chairman)
Cllr S Whittingham	Wheaton Aston
Cllr V Renfrew	Lapley
Cllr R Nelson	Wheaton Aston (Vice chairman) South Staffordshire Council
Cllr A Anderson	Stretton
Cllr M Smith	Wheaton Aston
Cllr J Hodgkiss	Wheaton Aston
Cllr D Hodgkiss	Stretton
Cllr D Weate	Wheaton Aston
Cllr M Griffiths	Lapley
Cllr J Ford	Wheaton Aston

Also in attendance:

Mrs A Watson	Parish Clerk
Mrs J Shulman	Assistant Parish Clerk
Cllr M Sutton	Staffordshire County Council (part of the meeting)

Apologies:

Absence:

Public Forum

One members of the public in attendance, no comments made

Standing orders were imposed 7. 15pm

1.Election of Chairman

Proposed: Cllr Millington is elected as Chairman for the for the forthcoming year

Seconded: Cllr Millington is elected as chairman for the forthcoming year

Resolved: Cllr Millington is elected Chairman for the forthcoming year

Cllr Millington signed the acceptance of office form.

Cllr Millington took the Chair

2: Election of Vice-Chairman

Proposed: Cllr Nelson is elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year

Seconded: Cllr Nelson is elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year

Resolved: Cllr Nelson is elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year

Cllr Nelson signed the acceptance of office form.

3.To consider apologies

All members present

4.Declaration of Interests

- i) Members confirmed there are no amendments to the register
- ii) Members confirmed there are no declarations of interest. The code of conduct was signed by all members.

5.To consider membership and delegated powers of:

Resolved: the following membership

a) Disciplinary and Grievance Panel

Cllr A Anderson

Cllr M Griffiths

b) Staffs appeal panel:

Cllr J Hodgkiss

Cllr Anderson

Cllr Renfrew

c) HR&HS Committee

Cllr Anderson

Cllr Millington

Cllr Whittingham

Cllr D Hodgkiss

Cllr Weate

Resolved to accept the terms of reference for the committee

d) Parish Council Clerk

Resolved to accept the scheme of delegation

6.To consider membership and terms reference of working groups and Committees:

Resolved: the following membership

Christmas Lights Working Group

Cllr A Anderson

Cllr D Hodgkiss

Cllr M Griffiths

Cllr J Hodgkiss

Cllr W Millington

Cllr D Weate

Cllr V Renfrew

Cllr Sue Whittingham

Cllr R Nelson

Cllr M Smith

Cllr J Ford

Parish Maintenance & Forward Planning Working Group

Cllr V Renfrew

Cllr M Griffiths

Cllr W Millington

Cllr R Nelson

Cllr M Smith

Cllr Sue Whittingham

Cllr J Ford

Finance Working Group

Cllr A Anderson

Cllr M. Griffiths

Cllr R Nelson

Cllr W Millington

Cllr Sue Whittingham

Cllr J Hodgkiss

Cllr J Ford

Planning Working Group

Cllr M Griffiths

Cllr W Millington

Cllr V Renfrew

Cllr M Smith

Cllr S Whittingham

Cllr J Ford

Cllr D Hodgkiss

HR & HS Committee

Cllr A Anderson

Cllr D Hodgkiss

Cllr W Millington

Cllr D Weate

Cllr Sue Whittingham

Lapley Green working group:

Cllr Millington

Cllr Renfrew

Cllr Nelson

Cllr M Griffiths

Traffic Management working group

Cllr W Millington

Cllr Sue Whittingham

Cllr R Nelson

Cllr A Anderson

Cllr M Smith

Cllr M Sutton

Cllr J Ford

Marston Field Redevelopment working group

Cllr Anderson

Cllr Millington

Cllr Nelson

Cllr J Ford

Cllr J Hodgkiss

Allotments working group:

Cllr Millington

Cllr Smith

Cllr Nelson

Cllr Weate

7.Additional Group Membership

Resolved to appoint Cllr Millington and recruit plot holders to form an Allotments Committee with the duty of managing the allotment area once it is functional. In the meantime, the working group will oversee the activities

Resolved to accept the Allotment committee terms of reference.

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council

Terms of Reference - Allotment Committee

The objective of the Committee is to assist the Parish Council in overseeing the proper management and maintenance of the allotment site. It needs to ensure that the terms of its Tenancy Agreement is up to date, as well as adhered to. This will include annual inspections, plot development and policy disputes as and when required.

Membership of the Committee

- Members of the committee will be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council each year. Membership will be 6 members. This is subject to the proviso that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council shall be *ex officio* members, plus 4 other Parish Council members. In addition, a maximum of 4 residents may join the committee.
- Any changes in membership of the committee after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council shall be subject to approval at the next Full Council meeting.
- The quorum of the committee shall be half of its members or three whichever is the greater.

Chairman

- The Chairman of the committee will be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council each year. (as per standing order 4 vi)
- In the event of the Chairman's absence the members of the committee present will appoint a Chairman at the beginning of the meeting.
- The Chairman of the Committee will report to Full Council on any matters which the Committee considers ought to be brought to the attention of the Council.

Frequency of Meetings

- The Committee shall meet at least every three months or at shorter intervals as required (except August).
- Date and time of the meeting to be agreed by the committee.

Minutes of Meetings

- All meetings of the committee will be convened in accordance with the Parish Council's standing orders.
- The Clerk shall minute the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Committee
- Draft minutes of Committee meetings shall form part of the monthly Full Council meeting for information.

- Draft minutes shall be considered and approved at the next Allotment committee meeting.

Powers of the Committee

The committee shall be empowered to:

- Delegated spending powers are issued to the Allotment Committee for maintenance up to the limit of £1000
- Monitor the allotment site for safe usage
- Recommend to Full Council annual rent charges
- Recommend 'rules of conduct' at the allotment site for approval by Full Council
- Promote facilities of the allotments and encourage its use for the benefit of the community.
- Manage, with the clerk, allocation of allotment plots
- Carry out formal risk assessments, in conjunction with the clerk

Review

These Terms of Reference are to be reviewed annually

8. To consider the appointment of Representatives to outside bodies:

Resolved to add the following Cllrs as representatives to:

Lapley & Wheaton Aston Village Hall Management Committee – Cllr Millington, Cllr Nelson-
representatives (Cllr J Hodgkiss, Cllr Weate, Cllr Whittingham are committee members and trustees)

Lapley & Wheaton Aston Recreation Ground Committee – Cllr D Hodgkiss, Cllr M Smith, Cllr R Nelson,
Cllr J Ford

Lapley & Wheaton Aston Old People's Welfare Committee – Cllr Millington

Wheaton Aston Community First Responders- Cllr Whittingham

Staffordshire Police Locality Accountability Forum – Cllr Millington, Cllr Ford, Cllr Anderson

Parish Charities Trustee- Cllr J Hodgkiss, Cllr D Hodgkiss, Cllr M Griffiths

9. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of 18th April 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th April 2024 were agreed to be a true and correct copy

10. To receive report from Parish Council Clerk

Clerks Report

Information

IR35 declarations completed for all contractors of the PC and submitted to the internal auditor

26.04.2024 Assistant Clerk has achieved ILCA qualification.

26.04.2024 Children's posters for BKV were laminated and ready for display. In addition they have been scanned and converted to a jpg image with children's names removed for safeguarding reasons. All poster images have been added to the LSWAPC website, and on Facebook with a thank you to those involved. Further posters received from St Mary's school were laminated for display and have been shared on the LSWAPC website and Facebook.

30.04.2024 NOx canisters found near Stoney Lane, Stretton, reported to the Police. BCA-37138-24-2121-03

03.05.2024 Mental health Awareness Week, series of social media and website posts planned.

15.05.2024 NOX CANISTERS FOUND AT MARSTON FIELD HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE POLICE

Letter sent to landowners of the track at the rear of Badgers End highlighting concerns about knotweed

2.5.24 Allotments documents sent to allotment society legal team to review

15.5.24- Update from Highways re blocked drain outside Deals Store Long Street_ Following Amy making me aware of this issue last year, the job had been outstanding for some time, therefore I was able to escalate the outstanding job, we then had the crews attend site to jet this gully on 14.08.23, they cleared the gully and managed to get it running slowly, but it was reported as working. However, they did also refer to roots being in the system and that it would benefit from a root cutter. This new task is within the workstack for action.

Consultations

SSC Publication plan for Local Plan 18th April 2024- 31st May 2024 [Local Plan Review | South Staffordshire District Council \(sstaffs.gov.uk\)](#)

Outstanding items update

- Allotments- waiting for lease to be checked by solicitor
- Defib at Ivetsey Rd- Planning are waiting for the site to be handed over. Once this has been completed an officer will assess the site for installation. SSC are to be landowners and are aware LSWA PC wish to install on site.
- Lapley Green registration-. Awaiting update from Tedstone Solicitors
- Gated alley Broadholes/Pinfold-. No update on the proposal to reopen the alley from SSC.
- Post office – no premises found., this has now been taken on at district level

Meetings/Events

Training/CPD/ SPCA Upcoming courses

Forthcoming training courses

May 2024

Communicating with your Community: Part 1	1/05/24	09:30
Crisis Communications for Local Councils	2/05/24	13:00
Dealing with local and regional media	3/05/24	13:00
Social Media for Councils: Getting started	7/05/24	13:00
motional Intelligence and Resilience	7/05/24	18:30
Communicating with your community: Part 2	8/05/24	09:30
Canva - Part 1	9/05/24	13:00
Data Protection - Part 1	10/05/24	13:00
Data Protection - Part 2	13/05/24	13:00
Councillors: Data Protection	13/05/24	18:30
Freedom of Information for councils	14/05/24	13:00
Data Protection - part 3	15/05/24	13:00
Canva - Part 2	16/05/24	13:00
Managing Difficult People and Conversations	20/05/24	13:00

Councillors: chairing meetings effectively	20/05/24	18:30
Social media for councils: advanced strategies	21/05/24	13:00
Engage more effectively with young people	23/05/24	13:00
Councillors: social media skills	28/05/24	19:00

June 2024

Recruiting and Retaining Councillors	4/06/24	13:00
Emotional Intelligence and Resilience	5/06/24	13:30
Communicating with your community: Part 1	6/06/24	13:00
Data Protection - Part 1	10/06/24	09:30
Councillors: Data Protection	10/06/24	18:30
Crisis Communications for Local Councils	11/06/24	09:30
Dealing with local and regional media	12/06/24	09:30
Communicating with your community: Part 2	13/06/24	13:00
Data Protection - Part 2	17/06/24	09:30
Social Media: Getting started	18/06/24	09:30
Councillors: chairing meetings effectively	18/06/24	18:30
Engage more effectively with young people	19/06/24	09:30
Canva Part 1 - Getting Started	20/06/24	09:30
Freedom of Information for councils	24/06/24	09:30
Data Protection - Part 3	24/06/24	13:00
Social Media: Advanced	25/06/24	09:30
Managing Difficult People and Conversations	26/06/24	09:30
Councillors: social media skills	26/06/24	18:30
Canva Part 2 - Advanced	27/06/24	09:30

24.9.24 CPRE planning training (online)

19.6.24 SSC Code of Conduct Training 5.30pm-6.30pm Coven Memorial Hall

Items emailed to councillors

15.4.24 Planning application 24/00277/FULHH Proposal: Replace sunroom roofs, first floor side extension to western side projection and solar panels to main roof. Location: The Winners Park Lane Lapley

15.4.24 CPRE training 24th September 24

15.4.24 Application No: 24/00336/FULHH Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension Location: 22 High Street Wheaton Aston STAFFORD ST19 9NP

17.4.24 SPCA upcoming courses

17.4.24 SSC lease details for Broadholes Lane

2.5.24 SPCA council news

13.5.24 SSC Planning app 24/00364/TTREE

15.5.25 Proludic link to video on inclusive play (MF Wg only)

Use of devolved powers

£60 agreed to purchase bark mulch for around tree beds on WA Green. No labour charge (BKV comp)

£99.99 drill for VO use

Response to planning comments:

none

SSC Planning Decision

None

A decision from the planning inspectorate has been returned today (23.4.24) dismissing the appeal for planning application 22/01048/OUT Sweet Turf Boarding Kennels, Slab Lane, little onn Gorse, Staffordshire ST19 5QL

Clerk confirmed the dates for meetings for the rest of the year as follows:

July 11th at 7pm

September 5th at 7pm

October 18th , 6pm start for the community meeting, 7pm start for full council meeting

December 5th (precept meeting) 7pm start

All held at Lapley and Wheaton Aston village hall

11.To receive report from Staffordshire County Council

Community fund is open for applications.

Climate change fund is open.

Legal work continues to deal with issues at Ivetsey Road

Investment in countryside parks has been announced, long term plan in in place to improve facilities.

Relaunch and improving the Staffordshire Way which passes through the parish.

Cllr Sutton left the meeting

12.To receive report from South Staffordshire Council

Road sweeper has been booked to attend the village, two visits due

Adhoc streetscene crew will begin work in the parish w/c 28th May, work to be completed was allocated at April's meeting.

WMI road closures have been changed- this has been advertised on social media and the PC website.

13.Financial matters appendix 3

Resolved:

- a. To approve the income and expenditure for April 2024
- b. To approve the reconciled Unity Trust main account
- c. To approve the 2023/24 Balance Sheet
- d. To approve the Annual Return Governance Statement
- e. To approve the Annual Return Accounting Statement
- f. To receive the Internal Independent Auditor's Report
- g. To note the inspection period

- h. To approve the use of Bacs and Direct debits for payments
- i. To note payments/decisions made under delegated powers
- j. Resolved to Appoint Black Rose solutions as the internal auditor for 2024/25
- k. Financial working group recommendations:
 - Vire £3000 to container reserve (created) from main account as unspent 2023/24
 - Vat income higher than anticipated at £11638.79. Recommend to vire excess to precept reserves at Barclays Bank
 - Finance WG to consider the future of the grounds maintenance contract as it is expected to be confirmed that the PC is able financially aid a church, should the cemetery be included in the schedule of works (due for renewal April 2025)

Please note that the audit documents are separate to this agenda and may not be accessible, for assistance please email office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

14. Subscriptions

Resolved to confirm the following memberships:

- Society of Local Council Clerks
- Staffordshire Parish Council Association
- CPRE Countryside Charity
- The Allotments Association
- Playing Fields Association

15. Planning recommendations

To consider planning matters including

- a) planning applications received:
- b) Planning application 24/00419/LBC

Works to existing garage and rear extension to provide further living accommodation; Alterations to form additional car parking space. Amendment to approved scheme reference 23/00629/LBC with the proposal for two windows in extension rear wall.

Priory Court Lapley Hall Mews Stretton Road Lapley STAFFORD ST19 9JN- 'LSWA PC does not have any objections to this application'

C Local plan- to consider a response to the publication plan for the local plan

'LSWA PC have viewed the plan and agree that the plan has been formulated in accordance with the government requirements and the local plan framework.

Members feel it is consistent with national policy, positively prepared by formulating a strategy that aims to meet infrastructure and effective in joint and cross boundary working East side but West side needs further considerations

Members note the reduction in cross boundary allocation to 640 on a capacity led assessment and agree this is a fair an appropriate approach. As the district is 80% green belt, the protection of this should be a planning priority.

Villages such as Wheaton Aston are on the border with Shropshire who are undertaking consultation to allocate a huge amount of provision on the South Staffs border. Members request that SSC officers consider the allocation of Shropshire and the effect on the border West side.

There has been a good level of consultation offered and as consultees we have been informed of each stage.'

16. Policy Review/adopt (appendix 4)

Resolved to adopt:

- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Complaints Procedure
- Financial Regulations
- FOI Scheme
- Governance Framework
- Media policy
- Members absence and apologies policy
- Scheme of Delegation
- Asset Register
- Risk Management Record
- Insurance details
- Investment Policy
- Appraisal policy
- Parish Risk Assessment and Management

17. Container

Awaiting on one more document from the Sports and Social Club, once received the legal team at SSC can draw up the agreement to be approved by full council

18. Allotment lease

Resolved Clerk to sign the lease

19. Stretton Bench

Resolved Cllr D Hodgkiss to engage with Stretton residents and inform clerk of selected bench design. Budget allocated and clerk to carry out works

20. Marston field working group recommendations:

Points to consider:

- Consultation responses
Good response received
Pump track remains the priority
- Rural exception scheme funding/ better health funding
To apply or funding for a pump track
- Pump track
Quotes are being obtained to send off with funding application. Add on perimeter path
- Enviropave for running track
This surfacing is excellent for the track, soft and durable. It can have thermoplastic pictures on. Ideal to add this to pump track project to complete whilst a digger is on site
- Three stage project
1st stage is the pump track, second stage play equipment and third stage gym equipment. Last two stages can be combined if the contractor is the same supplier for both elements
- Type of play equipment required
Double zip wire- one with accessible seat (Clerks to visit Hockerhill to view new accessible equipment)
Basket swing with solid swing base
Safer spaces for girls research suggested hammocks however his want prevalent in the survey results. To meet requirements a pendulum type of swing is advisable
3 dimensional space net (to enquire about burning)

Ninja trail (Parc our)- only available with one contractor

All metal equipment

Surveys back these suggestions

- Type of gym equipment required
 - Weights on frame – only available with one contractor
 - Arm bike – inclusivity and older people
 - Sit up bench on frame
 - Rowers
 - Steps – older people and reduction of falls (stay fit for longer)
 - Pull up bars on the frame
 - Surface challenge - older people and reduction of falls (stay fit for longer)
 - Balance challenge - older people and reduction of falls (stay fit for longer)
 - The online survey is unlikely to have represented older people as well as most responses were delivered on line
 - Three year plan
 - AW to update
 - Veolia funding – for future for gym instructor for elderly sessions
 - Funding options for stage 2 and 3- AW applied to SSC Health funding for gym equipment, there are multiple pots for funding for staying fit for longer . JS to investigate
 - Fundraising
 - Christmas light event to fundraise for the project in 2024 and summer 2025 look at hosting a fundraising event.
- Recommendation: to obtain several quotes and designs to host a public consultation to ensure the equipment is right. Initial contractors to be approached are Proludic, Kompan, Playdale, Wickstead and advertised nationally. Clerk to provide council with a specification document.

21. Items for future

Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

None

22. Date of next meeting: 11th July 2024 at 7pm at Lapley and Wheaton Aston Village Hall. This is subject to change

Meeting closed 8.40pm

Signed.....Chairman.....

Council Attendance

Date	RN	JH	MS	WM	DH	SW	DW	JF	AA	VR	MG	Total Attendance
23/5/24	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11/11

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council
Terms of Reference – HR and Health and Safety (HRHS) Committee

Membership of the Committee

- a) Membership of the committee will be as decided at the Annual meeting of the Parish Council each year, subject to the proviso that the chairman and vice-chairman of the Parish Council shall, in any event, be *ex officio* members.
- b) Any changes in the membership of the committee after the Annual Parish Council meeting shall be subject to approval at the next Full Council meeting.
- c) The quorum of the committee shall be half of its members or three whichever is the greater.

Chairman

- a) The chairman of the committee will be elected by the committee at its first meeting after the Annual meeting of the Parish Council.

Conduct of Meetings

- a) All meetings of the committee will be convened following the Parish Council's standing orders.
- b) Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk to the Council, another member of staff or a member of the committee.

Powers of the committee

The committee shall be empowered to:

- a) Review and update policies relevant to the purpose of the committee and ensuring they are observed by the Council
- b) Oversee the human resources administration of the Council
- c) Maintain training logs
- d) Monitor employee performance against budgets and taking any necessary action
- e) Appoint sub-committees to undertake any specific project work as necessary
- f) To recruit, retain and develop staff to undertake the work of the council
- g) To determine the pay and conditions of employment of the staff and to review and update these as necessary to comply with the law and with good practice
- h) To determine the staffing levels necessary to efficiently discharge the work required by the council and to review the workloads periodically
- i) To ensure the Health and Safety of staff employed by providing appropriate working spaces, tools and equipment and to train staff as necessary to safeguard their health & safety at work
- j) To undertake reviews of working practices and procedures of the Council as a whole when so requested and to make recommendations to Full Council.

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (which may be one and the same person) to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

1. Responsible Financial Officer Duties & Powers

The Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and shall be responsible for the Council's accounting procedures, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

2. Proper Officer Duties & Powers

2.1 The Clerk shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is specifically authorised to:

- 2.1.1 Receive declarations of acceptance of office;
- 2.1.2 Receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings;
- 2.1.3 Receive and retain plans and documents;
- 2.1.4 Sign notices, agreements, licences or other documents on behalf of the Council;
- 2.1.5 Receive copies of By-laws made by another local authority;
- 2.1.6 Certify copies of By-laws made by the Council;
- 2.1.7 Sign and issue summonses to attend meetings of the Council.
- 2.1.8 Keep proper records for all Council Meeting
- 2.1.9 Notify the Returning Officer of any casual vacancies and liaise with him/her regarding the conduct of elections

2.2 In addition, the Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- 2.2.1 The day to day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control.
- 2.2.2 Authorisation of routine expenditure within the agreed budgets. Agreed budgeted expenditure up to £500 Parish Clerk only, up to £5000 in conjunction with the Chairman
- 2.2.3 Arrange and administrate the Christmas Lights Event including incurring costs within the budget and report back to full Council
- 2.2.4 Emergency or necessary expenditure up to £500 outside of the agreed budget (see 3.1 - Urgent matters below).
- 2.2.5 Dealing with all press and public relations on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.
- 2.2.6 Liaise with appropriate bodies on clear uncontentious matters of concern raised by members of the public or Councillors without first putting it on a Council agenda.
- 2.2.7 Regularly produce a parish newsletter and Annual Report in consultation with the Chairman.
- 2.2.8 Make decisions as to whether items are appropriate for inclusion in the website and/or social media channels.
- 2.2.9 Respond to planning applications following a comment submitted by the Chairman in consultation with members
- 2.2.10 To view and control CCTV
- 2.2.11 Approve employee holidays and working hours after consultation with the Chairman
- 2.2.12 Prepare and research items/topics and present to Council to improve Council services and functions
- 2.2.13 Delegate to the Assistant Clerk and, where appropriate i.e information requirements
- 2.2.14 The Clerk is to receive employee timesheets and submit the Clerk timesheet periodically to the Chairman.
- 2.2.15 The Council supports agile working (in particular for employees with a medical need) The Clerk is permitted to work from home and in the office flexibly accounting for hours on a timesheet

- 2.3. Delegated actions of the Clerk shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the Council from time to time.

3 Urgent Matters

- 3.1 In the event of any matter arising **which requires an urgent decision** notwithstanding delegated powers granted by paragraph 2.2 above, the Clerk shall forthwith consult with the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman and those Members so consulted together with the Clerk shall have delegated power to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the particular matter then under consideration.
- 3.2 Before exercising the delegated powers granted by paragraph 3.1 above, those Members consulted shall consider whether the matter is of sufficient interest to justify recommending to the Chairman that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council should be called.
- 3.3 Whenever any action is taken under this Standing Order, full details of the circumstances justifying the urgency and of the action taken shall be submitted in writing to the next available meeting of the Council.
- 3.4 With respect to the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020 and Infectious Disease Policy has been implemented which further delegates powers. These additional powers exist only during the activation of the Highly Infectious Disease policy

Finance Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
2. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
3. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
4. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
5. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
6. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
7. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
8. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the Clerk or person calling the meeting in their place.
9. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - a) Consider financial aspects and implications for the parish council
 - b) To ensure that all procedures are correctly followed
 - c) To ensure that the councils finances are in good order
 - d) To plan for future projects and allocate funds accordingly
 - e) To aid with setting the budget and precept each November
10. The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).

11. The working group shall provide a verbal report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Christmas Working Group

Terms of Reference

The Christmas Working Party has been established to formulate proposals and make recommendations for Christmas celebrations in the parish. Working parties cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, and any recommendations made by working parties will be subject to approval by the full council or suitably authorised committees or members of staff.

12. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
13. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
14. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
15. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
16. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
17. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
18. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
19. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the Clerk or person calling the meeting in their place.
20. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - Formulate and submit recommendations for the Christmas celebrations in the parish including the village Christmas tree and decorations
 - Invite tenders based on councils requirements
 - Organise entertainment for the event
21. The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
22. The working group shall provide a verbal report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Lapley Green Working Group

Terms of Reference

23. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
24. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
25. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
26. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
27. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
28. Working group meetings are not open to the public.

29. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
 30. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the clerk or person acting on their behalf
 31. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - f) Consider the improvement of Lapley Green
 - g) Complete the process of applying for Village Green status
 - h) Draft the scheme of management for the village green status
- 10 The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
32. The working group shall provide a report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Planning Working Group

Terms of Reference

33. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
34. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
35. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
36. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
37. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
38. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
39. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
40. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the clerk or persons on their behalf. Best practise would be to meet prior to each full council meeting where there are planning matters to consider. .
41. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
Consider all planning applications and matters within the parish
 - i) Consider planning applications. The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
 - j) In the case of insufficient time to return a comment, the clerk is able to submit a comment on behalf of the council using delegated powers. Details will be sent to all members to view and the comment is to be returned to the clerk via the planning chair
42. The working group shall provide a verbal report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.
43. To working group will consider the parish councils planning policy in all decisions

Traffic Management Working Group

Terms of Reference

44. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
45. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
46. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
47. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
48. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
49. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
50. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
51. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the working group itself.
52. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - To provide resolutions to any traffic/ road Management issues' raised within the Parish
 - Make recommendations to the council concerning issues raised with in the Parish regarding road and traffic. This may include committing expenditure and engaging with other agencies to resolve the issues and furthering relationships with associated bodies
 - To recommend to the Parish Council appropriate budget provisions for the current and coming financial years for items within the remit.
 - To approve or comment upon actions taken and reported by the Parish Clerk on such matters.
 - To consider all aspects of road safety in order to meet the purpose of this committee's function.
 - Make recommendations to apply for and receive donations from other parties, such as Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police and South Staffordshire Council, and equipment or funds to progress the project. These items must be reported to Full Council
 - Liaise with relevant associated bodies on the maintenance to be carried out outside of the Council
 - The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
 - The working group shall provide a verbal report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Parish Maintenance & Forward Planning Working Group

Terms of Reference

53. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
54. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
55. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
56. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
57. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
58. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
59. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
60. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the Clerk or any person acting on their behalf.
61. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - k) Consider the schedule of the council's annual grounds maintenance contract.

- l) Monitor and review the grounds maintenance contractor's performance.
 - m) Consider maintenance requirements of public footpaths & rights of way.
 - n) Review RoSPA reports of the council's play areas.
 - o) Consider signage within the parish,
 - p) Consider any other maintenance issues not covered by the above.
62. The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
63. The working group shall provide a report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Marston Field Redevelopment Working Group

Terms of Reference

64. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
65. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
66. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
67. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
68. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
69. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
70. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
71. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the working group itself.
72. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
- q) Consider the implementation of the redevelopment of Marston field
 - r) Consult with residents about items required
 - s) Consult with play area providers for plans
 - t) Make a recommendations to full council
 - u) Consider stages of work required and costs
 - v) Consider funding options and make applications
 - w) Consider tender process and scope
 - x) Consider any received quotes for work
- 10 The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).

The working group shall provide a verbal report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Allotments Working Group

Terms of Reference

73. The membership of the working group shall be determined by the council.
74. The membership may include members of the public at the discretion of the council.
75. The chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.

76. The Vice-Chairman of the working group shall be elected by the members of the working group at its first meeting after 1st May.
 77. Three members of the working group are required for a quorum.
 78. Working group meetings are not open to the public.
 79. Working group members must be given three clear days' notice of the time and place of a working group meeting. This may be post, telephone or email.
 80. The number, time, date and venue for the working group meetings shall be determined by the working group itself.
 81. The purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - y) Consider the implementation of the allotment project
 - z) Make a recommendation to full council on required paperwork to manage the allotments and tenants
 - aa) Consider stages of work required and costs
 - bb) Consider tender process and scope (for the creation of plots)
 - cc) Consider any received quotes for work (for the creation of plots)
 - dd) Consider funding options and make applications
- 10 The working group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above).
82. The working group shall provide a report of each meeting to the council. The report shall contain recommendations for approval by the council.

Appendix 3

Lapley Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council

Income transactions - receipts approval list

Start of year

01/04/24

Tn no	Ref.	Gross	Heading	Cttee	Invoice	Details	Ref.
date					Total		
1		£65,254.00	10		PC 23/04/24	South Staffordshire District Council - 1st precept instalment	
2	bacs24042	£11,638.79	99		PC 24/04/24	HMRC - vat return years 2023-24	
		£11,638.79				4hmrc	
Total		£76,892.79					

Lapley Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council

Expenditure transactions - payments approval list

Start of year

01/04/24

No	Payment	Gross	To pay	Heading	Invoice	Invoice	Details	Cheque
Reference								
5	221993296	£239.09	£239.09	100/19/4	01/04/24	INV-D-03351	Cloudy It -	£239.09
14	118554846	£1,291.99	£1,291.99	120/1/1	08/04/24	1857	Ditton Services -	

Grounds Maintenance £1,291.99

2	£10.00	£10.00	100/3/2	16/04/24		Cpre - Zoom Course		
6	985438821	£320.00	£320.00	100/2	16/04/24	514948/9882 South Staffordshire District Council - Monthly Office 83.	Rent	
7	259433387	£8.55	£8.55	100/18/1	16/04/24	Expenses £8.55	Mr. Malcolm Bissell -	
11	723093749	£31.50	£31.50	100/6/1	16/04/24	Hall Management Committee - Room Hire for Meetings	Wheaton Aston Village	
28		£28.80	£28.80	100/18/1	16/04/24	Expenses	Mrs Amy Watson -	
1	206507416	£55.97	£55.97	130/2/4	17/04/24	7003566042	WaterPlus - £55.97	
22		£63.94	£63.94	100/10	17/04/24	M023 VC	British Telecom -	
	Monthly Business Bill							
27	134754058	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	180/1	17/04/24		Brewood & District	
	Voluntary Car Scheme - Donation	£1,000.00	£1,000.00					
29		£300.00	£300.00	180/3	23/04/24		WASP - Annual grant	
	24/25							
	30fxcard2304	£99.99	£99.99	170	23/04/24		Canva - annual	
	subscription cost	£99.99						
	24canva							
31	equals card cleaner	£30.15	£30.15	170	23/04/24		Rawlins Paint - paint	
	£30.15							
	rawlins							
No	Payment	Gross	To pay	Heading	Invoice	Invoice	Details	Cheque
	Reference							
32	equalscarda	£15.03	£15.03		23/04/24		Amazon -	£15.03
	mazon							
1	£8.08			170				cable ties for vo
2	£6.95			170				whiteboard markers
3	150775719	£985.53	£985.53	100/23	30/04/24		South Staffordshire District Council - Annual Business Rates	
	£985.53							
4	195606401	£126.84	£126.84	100/10	30/04/24	IN10123508	Npower Limited - Jan -	
	March	£126.84						

8	877870058	£80.53	£80.53	100/9	30/04/24	58971773	Ricoh U K Limited - Printer Toner£80.53
9	98574422	£12.00	£12.00	100/9	30/04/24	58971884	Ricoh U K Limited - Ecom Delivery Cost £12.00
10	720108701	£715.53	£715.53	100/10	30/04/24	IN10119926	Npower Limited - £715.53
12	96708280	£378.00	£378.00	100/4/1	30/04/24	0005218	Pink Print - News and Views March 2024 £378.00
13	551062114	£150.00	£150.00	100/4/1	30/04/24	0005219	Pink Print - Newsletter Distribution£150.00
21	425246586	£111.06	£111.06	120/5	30/04/24	26761	JRB Enterprises Ltd - Dog waste bags £111.06
23	131669001	£300.00	£300.00	180/3	30/04/24		St. Mary's First School - PTA £300.00
24	187211085	£300.00	£300.00	180/3	30/04/24		Wheaton Aston Carnival Association - Donations £300.00
25	578220972	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	180/3	30/04/24		Wheaton Aston Wanderers FC - Donation£1,000.00
26	725984335	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	180/3	30/04/24		Wheaton Aston & Lapley Lunch Club - Donation £1,000.00
34		£56.56	£56.56	100/10	30/04/24		EE - Monthly charges
35	bacs02042	£1,752.00	£1,752.00	130/2/4	02/04/24		Capital Sflu Group - kerb drop at allotments

£4,660.14 £4,660.14 Confidential
Bank Account Reconciled Statement

Unity Trust - Current Account

1111559/2035784 30-98-00

Statement Number	37	Bank Statement No.	37
Statement Opening Balance	£9,452.56	Opening Date	01/04/24
Statement Closing Balance	£70,766.38	Closing Date	30/04/24
True/ Cashbook Closing Balance	£70,766.38		

Date	Cheque/ Ref.	Supplier/ Customer	Debit (£)	Credit (£)	Balance (£)
31/03/24		WaterPlus	50.94	0.00	9,401.62
16/04/24	Transfer		450.00	0.00	8,951.62
23/04/24		South Staffordshire District Council	0.00	65,254.00	74,205.62
24/04/24	bacs240424hmrc	HMRC	0.00	11,638.79	85,844.41

24/04/24	Transfer		100.00	0.00	85,744.41
30/04/24		WASP	300.00	0.00	85,444.41
30/04/24		British Telecom	63.94	0.00	85,380.47
30/04/24		Mrs Amy Watson	28.80	0.00	85,351.67
30/04/24		EE	56.56	0.00	85,295.11
30/04/24		Cpre	10.00	0.00	85,285.11
30/04/24	118554846	Ditton Services	1,291.99	0.00	83,993.12
30/04/24	131669001	St. Mary's First School	300.00	0.00	83,693.12
30/04/24	134754058	Brewood & District Voluntary	1,000.00	0.00	82,693.12
		Car Scheme			
30/04/24	150775719	South Staffordshire District	985.53	0.00	81,707.59
		Council			
30/04/24	187211085	Wheaton Aston Carnival	300.00	0.00	81,407.59
		Association			
30/04/24	195606401	Npower Limited	126.84	0.00	81,280.75
30/04/24	205100491	Staffordshire County Council	901.36	0.00	80,379.39
		Superannuation Fund			
30/04/24	206507416	WaterPlus	55.97	0.00	80,323.42
30/04/24	221993296	Cloudy It	239.09	0.00	80,084.33
30/04/24	248107537	Salary			
30/04/24	259433387	Mr. Malcolm Bissell	8.55	0.00	78,114.02
30/04/24	425246586	JRB Enterprises Ltd	111.06	0.00	78,002.96
30/04/24	551062114	Pink Print	150.00	0.00	77,852.96
30/04/24	578220972	Wheaton Aston Wanderers FC	1,000.00	0.00	76,852.96
30/04/24	5922341770	salary			
30/04/24	720108701	Npower Limited	715.53	0.00	75,722.92
30/04/24	723093749	Wheaton Aston Village Hall	31.50	0.00	75,691.42
		Management Committee			
30/04/24	7259843356	Wheaton Aston & Lapley	1,000.00	0.00	74,691.42
		Lunch Club			
30/04/24	780642794	salary			
30/04/24	877870058	Ricoh U K Limited	80.53	0.00	74,530.18
30/04/24	920562171	salary			
30/04/24	96708280	Pink Print	378.00	0.00	73,747.36

30/04/24	9684808958	HMRC			
30/04/24	985438821	South Staffordshire District Council	320.00	0.00	72,530.38
30/04/24	98574422	Ricoh U K Limited	12.00	0.00	72,518.38
30/04/24	bacs020424CAP	Capital Sflu Group	1,752.00	0.00	70,766.38

Uncleared and unrepresented effects

Total uncleared and unrepresented		0.00	0.00
Total debits / credits	15578.97	76892.79	

Reconciled by Amy Watson

Balance Sheet

31/03/2331/03/24

£ £

Unaudited

Current assets

0.00 Investments	0.00		
0.00 Loans Made	0.00		
0.00 Investment	0.00		
0.00 Stocks	0.00		
0.00 VAT Recoverable	0.00		
0.00 Debtors	0.00		
0.00 Payment in Advance			0.00
115,999.12 Cash in Hand & at Bank			138,057.58
115,999.12 TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS			138,057.58
115,999.12 TOTAL ASSETS			138,057.58

Current liabilities

0.00 Loans Received	0.00		
0.00 Temporary Borrowing			0.00
0.00 VAT Payable	0.00		
0.00 Creditors	0.00		
0.00 Receipts in Advance			0.00
0.00 TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES			0.00
115,999.12 TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			138,057.58
0.00 Long Term Borrowing			0.00
0.00 Deferred Liabilities			0.00
0.00 Deferred Credits	0.00		

0.00	0.00		
115,999.12	NET ASSETS		138,057.58
Represented by			
9,382.12	General Fund	7,972.13	
5,000.00	Election	4,790.00	
52,000.00	Contingency (3 months precept)		54,749.13
8,657.00	Broadholes Lane Renovation		31,758.32
0.00	Primrose Bank Play Equipment.		0.00
5,000.00	Wheaton Aston Village Car Park		5,000.00
2,000.00	Marston Road Youth Shelter		1,250.00
2,500.00	Marston Road Skate Park		2,500.00
10,500.00	Marston Road Play Equipment		11,500.00
2,000.00	Office Equipment		2,275.00
500.00	War Memorial Repair		500.00
0.00	Bus Shelter Repair/Replacement		0.00
155.00	Chairman's Chain Replacement		215.00
Drainage			
0.00	Tree work	500.00	
500.00	Christmas	1,000.00	
	2,000.00	Surfaces	2,200.00
2,000.00	Birkenshaw Lane Clearance		1,000.00
4,680.00	Defib and kiosk		2,478.00
3,500.00	Clerk absence contingency		3,500.00
0.00	notice board WA	0.00	
600.00	Crime Prevention		200.00
Clerk training			
1,500.00	Reserve to fund future qualifications		1,500.00
755.00	Speed indicator devices		400.00
2,770.00	Lapley Green reserve		2,770.00
0.00	0.00		
0.00	container	0.00	
0.00	LONG TERM Investment Accounts		0.00
0.00	Liability Reserves e.g. deposits		0.00
115,999.12			138,057.58
106,617.00	Reserves total excluding general fund and liabilities		130,085.45

0.00 Reserves total of liabilities e.g. deposits 0.00
 9,382.12 General fund total 7,972.13
 115,999.12 138,057.58

Black Rose Solutions Ltd

Internal Audit - Report

Name of Council - Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Date of
 Audit - 30th April 2024

Annual Return - Internal Control Objectives

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	YES
Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?	yes
Is the cashbook arithmetic correct?	yes
Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	yes
The council uses the Edge accounting system	
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES

PG.B.5 • Check that VAT reclaims are prepared and submitted in a timely manner in line with the underlying records and in accordance with current HMRC requirements ^{ok} yes yes yes yes

Are payments supported by invoices?	18/05/2023
Is all expenditure approved?	n/a
Is VAT appropriately accounted for?	
Does the Council hold Power of Competence?	
Re adopted?	
If not, does the council monitor s137 expenditure against limit?	

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	YES
Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	no
Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment?	yes
Is Insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	yes
Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	yes
	Review
Risk Assessment	07/09/2023
Financial Regulations	18/05/2023
Standing Orders	18/05/2023

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress YES against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	
Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?	yes
Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council?	yes
Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	no
Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	yes
Are reserves appropriate?	yes
Earmarked Reserves	71,836
General Reserves	66,221
Months of Income	5
Months of expenditure	6
Reserves are in line with guidance in the Practitioners Guide, which states that general reserves (cash flow and contingency) should be between 3 and 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure.	

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	YES
Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?	yes
Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	yes
Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes
Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	yes
Does line 4 include only Salary, NI & Pension	yes
Does the council monitor off payroll working (IR35)	yes

. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
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Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	yes
Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	yes
Is the council VAT registered?	no
Are returns submitted in a timely manner?	yes
Is VAT reclaimed on exempt business activities reviewed and considered insignificant?	n/a*
Are receipts for business activities within the registration threshold?	n/a
In 24/25 the council will be making significant expenditure on the allotments, which will class as a business activity Exempt from VAT. This will mean that the council needs to monitor whether the VAT reclaimed is considered insignificant in line with VAT Notice 749.	note
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	N/a
The council does not hold petty cash	
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	YES
Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	yes
Are the assets and investments registers up to date?	yes
Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	yes
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	YES
Is there a bank reconciliation for each account?	yes
Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion and approved by council?	ok
Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	no
Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	n/a
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	YES
Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) ?	R&P
Are debtors and creditors properly recorded?	n/a
Do accounts agree with the cashbook?	yes
Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	yes

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 22/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly certified itself exempt	N/a
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The council did not certify itself exempt

Local council name: Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council

**Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights
Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024**

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 234)

<p>1. Date of announcement: 31st May 2024 (a)</p> <p>2. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounts to be audited and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them. For the year ended 31 March 2024 these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:</p> <p>(b) Amy Watson, Parish Clerk, Office F028 Staffordshire Business Hub, South Staffordshire Council, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PX</p> <p>commencing on (c) 3rd June 2024</p> <p>and ending on (d) 12th July 2024</p> <p>3. Local Government Electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and • the right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the Authority (f). <p>The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose during the inspection period at 2 above.</p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of this notice on your website.</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and contact details of the Clerk or other person to whom any person may apply to inspect the accounts.</p> <p>(c) And</p> <p>(d) The inspection period must be 30 working days in total and commence no later than 1 July 2024.</p>
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<p>4. The auditor's limited assurance review is being conducted under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the National Audit Office' Code of Audit Practice. Your review is being carried out by:</p> <p>Mazars LLP, The Corner, Bank Chambers, 26 Mosley Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF</p> <p>Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk</p>	
<p>5. This announcement is made by (e) <i>Amy Watson, Parish Clerk and RFO</i></p>	<p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice</p>

Appendix 4

Complaints Procedure

1. Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 3.1. complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - 3.2. complaints against Councillors (including Cllr to Cllr complaints). Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on **23rd May 2024** and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of South Staffordshire Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of South Staffordshire Council.
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed
5. You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Parish Council Manager. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Parish Council Manager. The addresses and numbers are set out below:

6. The Parish Council Manager will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days. Please note that the Parish Council Manager is a part time employee.
7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Parish Council Manager, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.
8. The Parish Council Manager or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.
9. The Parish Council Manager or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)
10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Hr&Hs Committee or to the full Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

Contacts

1. The Parish Council Manager of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council:
Address: Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council, FF028, The Business Hub,
Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PE
Telephone: **01902 327091/** 07495 789051
Email: office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
2. The Chairman of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council:
Email: w.millington@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
3. The Monitoring Officer for Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council:
Address: South Staffordshire Council, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PE
Telephone: 01902 696000
Email: l.fowkes@sstaffs.gov.uk

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on 23rd May 2024
Next review: May 2025

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General

These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.

Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.

In these Financial Regulations:

- 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
- "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
- "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
- 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
- *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
- 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
- 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. [The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly.] The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the council;
- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

The council must not delegate any decision regarding:

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000 and

Risk management and internal control

The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

The Clerk as RFO, shall prepare, for approval by [the council], a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk as the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**

- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair {or a cheque signatory} shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.

Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

Accounts and audit

All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:

- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
- **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**

The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return.

The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.

Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.

The internal auditor shall be appointed by [the council] and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:

- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the management or control of the council

Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

Budget and precept

Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its [council tax (England)/budget (Wales)] requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.

Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in November for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the [Chair of the Council or relevant committee]. {The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.}

No later than December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all [receipts and payments/income and expenditure] for the following financial, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. {Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.}

Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council {finance committee} not later than the end of November each year.

The draft budget {with any committee proposals and [three-year]} forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the finance working group and a recommendation made to the council.

Having considered the proposed budget, the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of December for the ensuing financial year.

Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.

The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.

The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.

Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council {or relevant committee}.

Procurement

Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.

The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.

Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.

For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:

For contracts estimated to exceed £30,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.

For contracts greater than £5,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes; where the value is between £1000 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates {which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.}

For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.

As a response to climate change LSWA PC has committed to follow a Climate and Biodiversity Policy and therefore will consider the location of all contractors before placing any orders with the view of reducing mileage and emissions

Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.

The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
- ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
- iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
- iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council {or relevant committee}. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- The Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £1000 excluding VAT.
- the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below £5000 and above £1000 excluding VAT.
- in respect of grants, full council within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
- the council for all items over £5,000;

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order {unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council} or make any contract on behalf of the council.

No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.

In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services {above £250 excluding VAT} unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by [the RFO].

Banking and payments

The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.

All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by

the clerk/RFO. {Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO}.

Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

All payments shall be made by [online banking/cheque], in accordance with a resolution of the council {or duly delegated committee}{or a delegated decision by an officer}, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.

For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council {or a duly delegated committee} may authorise in advance for the year}.

A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.

A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.

The Clerk/RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments {only} in the following circumstances:

- i. any payments of up to £1000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
- ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
- iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the [Clerk and RFO] certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council {or finance committee}.
- iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring (retrospective) authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, to the council. The council {or committee} shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

Electronic payments

Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify two councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. {The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.}

All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.

No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator [an authorised signatory] shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.

Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.

Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.

A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next council meeting and appended to the minutes.

With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.

Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed {or approved online} by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.

Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Clerk and a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two year].

Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

Remembered password facilities {other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification} should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

Cheque payments

Cheques or orders for payment in accordance in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members and countersigned by the Clerk.

A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.

To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council {or committee} meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

Payment cards

Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the Village Orderly and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance working group in writing before any order is placed.

A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Clerk.

Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used {under any circumstances.}

Petty Cash

{The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly

- a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
- b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.}

Payment of salaries and allowances

As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.

Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.

Salary rates shall be agreed by the council. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council other than contractual ones.

Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.

Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the finance committee] to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

Loans and investments

Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the [Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government] (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

Income

The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The Clerk shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by [the RFO] and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

The Clerk shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date}. OR {Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made {quarterly where the claim exceeds [£100] and} at least annually at the end of the financial year.}

Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the clerk/RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.

Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk]to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

Stores and equipment

{[The officer in charge of each section] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment [in that section].}

Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

Assets, properties and estates

The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.

The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed [£500]. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

Insurance

The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.

The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers {in consultation with the Clerk}.

All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee.

a. Charities

Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO.

The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

Governance Framework and internal controls review

1. **Scope of Governance Framework Responsibility**

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council (LSWAPC) is required to have an adequate and effective system to discharge the functions of the Council whilst implementing arrangements for the management of risk. In order to achieve this there is a need for LSWAPC to implement a comprehensive internal control policy to ensure that its business is conducted within the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

2. **The Purpose of Governance Framework**

LSWAPC Governance Framework provides a comprehensive range of internal controls in the form of a checklist that will confirm the existence of a sound system of management which includes the identification and control of risk whilst seeking to eliminate fraud, error and misstatement. It will provide a satisfactory foundation for internal audit and give an adequate level of assurance that LSWAPC is enabled to complete the annual governance statement, particularly assertions two and six.

3. **Personnel Involved with Governance Framework**

The key personnel that will review and implement the LSWAPC Governance Framework include:

- Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer: The duties of the Clerk / RFO will be laid down in a Job Description which should be reviewed each year. The Clerk will be LSWAPC's Responsible Financial Officer and will act as advisor and administrator to LSWAPC and will be responsible for the day to day management of LSWAPC's finances.
- Assistant Clerk: The Assistant Clerk will provide support to the Clerk / RFO in respect to all matters of LSWAPC administration and finance.
- Chairman of the Council: The Chairman of LSWAPC will be elected by the elected Members of LSWAPC and will have all the powers and duties vested by law.
- Finance Working Group led by the Finance Working Group Chairman. The Finance Working Group will consider matters regarding finance and forward planning, including Annual Accounts and Governance and will recommend or otherwise that such matters be accepted by full Council.
- Appointed Independent and Competent Internal Auditor: The appointed Internal Auditor will, at not less than yearly intervals, provide a selective assessment of LSWAPC's procedures and controls to ensure compliance against the current legal framework as imposed on LSWAPC.

4. **Review of Effectiveness of Governance Framework**

The key elements of control to be tested are as follows:

- Has LSWAPC appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)?
- Has LSWAPC appointed a Chairman who may exercise all the statutory powers and duties in respect to meetings, ensuring smooth running of meetings and the certification of minutes on behalf of LSWAPC Members?
- Has LSWAPC established committees and/or working groups to simplify the management of key elements of its lawful business?
- If so has the committee and/or working group appointed a Chairman to ensure smooth running of meetings and to verbally report on matters from the working group meeting to full Council?
- Has LSWAPC formally adopted both Standing Orders & Financial Regulations?
- Are the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations closely adhered to in order to provide a consistent approach to meetings and decision making?
 - Are items or services purchased against pre-determined limits competitively purchased?
- Has LSWAPC conducted risk assessment for the current year of operation to determine the financial risks it is exposed to and if so is this recorded in the Minutes?

- Has the LSWAPC risk assessment been scrutinised to ensure that it is comprehensive and up to date and identifies any actions that it considers necessary to minimise those risks?
- Where necessary to does LSWAPC have adequate and appropriate insurance cover to offset risk?
- Does LSWAPC maintain an up-to-date Assets Register of material assets owned and is the Register viewed in conjunction with the Insurance Schedule Valuations?
- Do the LSWAPC minutes identify any unusual financial activity?
- Does LSWAPC regularly review and document its financial controls?
- Do LSWAPC procedures allow for back up of records to enable reconstruction of data for business continuity and detection of fraud or error?
- Does LSWAPC have in place sufficient accounting controls to include as a minimum the following elements:
 - Recorded Minutes that show that previous year Internal & External audits have been reviewed and matters arising addressed?
 - Is a cashbook maintained and up to date to ensure that all financial transactions are recorded promptly and correctly?
 - Is the cashbook accurate and arithmetically correct?
 - Is the cashbook regularly balanced in line with bank statements?
 - Are all LSWAPC bank accounts subject to regular reconciliation?
 - Are cashbook payments supported by invoices and have they been authorised and minuted?
 - Does LSWAPC properly record income and bank funds promptly?
 - Does LSWAPC have adequate and effective security controls in respect to cash?
 - Does LSWAPC have a recording system for Petty Cash which is supported by VAT invoices and receipts where appropriate?
 - Do LSWAPC regularly check and sign-off Petty Cash expenditure and balances?
 - Does LSWAPC check payroll expenditure records?
 - Does LSWAPC have confidence that its PAYE & NIC systems are correctly operated?
 - Does LSWAPC identify VAT payments and correctly record and reclaim these?
 - Does LSWAPC separately identify and record Section 137 payments and are these within the defined statutory limits?
 - Does LSWAPC set its Precept based upon a pre-prepared Annual Budget?
 - Does the Annual Budget setting review its income and expenditure in consideration of Actual Figures for the previous year, End of Current Year Forecasting and Actual Outturn for the Year?
 - Do the LSWAPC Finance and Forward Planning Working Group and full Council regularly review income and expenditure against the budgeted figures?
 - Do the LSWAPC Finance and Forward Planning Working Group and full Council seek timely understanding and explanation of any significant variances to the budget?
 - Are all LSWAPC financial controls documented, regularly reviewed and signed off by full Council?
- Does LSWAPC prepare its end of year accounts on the correct basis using '*Income and Expenditure*'?
 - Does LSWAPC correctly record debtors and creditors where appropriate?
 - Does LSWAPC start of year and end of year balances on all accounts mirror the cashbook figures?
 - Does LSWAPC maintain an adequate audit trail between the accounts and underlying financial records?
- Does LSWAPC have a procedure for the recovery of delinquent debt and the writing off of non-recoverable sums?

LSWA PC Media Policy

5. Significant Issues Identified via Governance Framework

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council has not identified any significant issues arising from Governance Framework reviews in respect to the previous twelve months and the forthcoming year. In addition both Internal Audit and External Audit have similarly identified no arising issues.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for contact with the media.
- 1.2 Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, please contact the Council’s Clerk or, in his/her absence, the deputy Clerk
- 1.3 The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet (“the media”).
- 1.4 This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply .Legal requirements and restrictions
- 1.5 This policy is subject to the Council’s obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. The Council’s financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council’s publication scheme.
- 1.6 The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council’s standing orders, under contract or by common law. Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council’s publication scheme.

2.0 Contact with the Media

- 2.1 Approaches from the media should be referred to the Chairman who is the authorised contact with the media in consultation with the Parish Council Clerk. The Parish Council Clerk, is, however, given permission to speak to the media in the Chairman’s absence.
- 2.2 Statements made by the Chairman to the media should reflect the Council’s opinion.
- 2.3 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given are their own and not necessarily those of the Council.
- 2.4 Caution should be exercised when submitting letters to the editor for publication in newspapers. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. However, such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. Letters representing the views of the Council should only be submitted by the Chairman or the Parish Council Clerk. If other Members choose to use the letters column to express their own opinions on Council policies, they should make clear that the views put forward are those of the individual Member. Care should be taken not to disclose any information of a confidential nature, if a Member is unclear whether information is confidential they should consult the Parish Council Clerk.

At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council. The Parish Council’s Code of Conduct is relevant here – section 5. states that “You

must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.” Chairman

MEMBER ABSENCE AND APOLOGIES POLICY

Adopted date: May 2024

Review date : May 2026

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Councillors are elected to represent the interest of the whole of the parish of Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston and those of their ward. In order to fulfil this role, it is expected that all councillors will make a full contribution to the work of the Council throughout their term of office.

1.2 This will include:

- attendance at meetings of the Council
- attendance at meetings of committees and working parties to which they may be appointed
- responding to correspondence from officers on Council matters

1.3 All councillors will hopefully have satisfied themselves before standing for election/co-option that they are able to commit the necessary time to fulfilling this important and rewarding role within the community. Any councillor who, whether through change of circumstances or otherwise, finds they are no longer able to give sufficient time to the role should in the first instance consult the Parish Clerk to discuss what further support, or options may be available but may ultimately have to consider whether, in the interests of their electorate, it is appropriate for them to continue as a councillor.

1.4 Elected/co-opted Members are expected to attend meetings that they have been assigned as part of their role. However, there will be occasions when they are unable to attend for a variety of reasons. To ensure that the record is accurate this policy sets out the procedure the Council will follow for Member's absence from Council meetings and submission of apologies.

NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

2.1 Being a councillor is about much more than just attending meetings; the role as a community leader is equally important but it is at meetings of the Council and its committees where issues are debated, and formal decisions are made.

2.2 Councillors should make effort to attend all meetings of which they are a member but where this is not possible they should submit their apologies to the Parish Clerk in advance of the meeting and by 3pm on the day of the meeting. A Councillor who is absent from all meetings of the Council and any committees of which they are a member for a period of six months automatically ceases to be a member of the Council unless they have been given leave of absence by the Council before the expiry of that six-month period – s.85 (1) Local Government Act 1972

2.3 Whilst the Parish Clerk will make every effort to monitor attendance and forewarn any councillors who may be nearing the expiry of the six-month period, the responsibility for ensuring that they comply with the requirements of s.85 is that of the individual councillor.

2.4 There are some specific points and exceptions to note:

- a. s.85 relates to meetings of Council, committees and sub-committees. It does not apply to working parties or task or policy groups and so attendance at those meetings is not sufficient for the purposes of the s.85. Neither does attendance as an observer at a meeting of a committee of which the councillor is not a member count, even if invited to speak by the Chairperson.
- b. Absence due to service in HM Forces (including Territorial or reserve duties) will normally be disregarded for the purposes of s.85.²

LEGISLATION

3.1 Section 85. of the Local Government Act 1972 states; "... if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority."

3.2 If a councillor is unable to attend a meeting of full council or a committee or sub-committee that they are a member they are required to give notice of this to the Parish Clerk. If a Councillor is not present at a meeting that they have been summoned to attend, their absence will be confirmed in the minutes of the meeting.

3.3 Where a council is considering reason for absence, some reason of explanation must be known to it and this must be approved by affirmative resolution at the earliest possible moment before the end of the six months.³ If at that moment the council fails to consider the question, the office falls vacant without further ado, and the vacancy must be declared and filled in the proper manner.

3.4 There is nothing to prevent a local council from approving a reason for absence in advance.

3.5 The Council should resolve on the approval of absence, the receiving and noting of apologies is not Council approval of absence.

PROCEDURE FOR MEMBER ABSENCE AND APOLOGIES

4.1 The name of members present at the meeting will be recorded⁴ and this record will form part of the minutes of each meeting. The name of members absent will be recorded and will form part of the minutes.

4.2 If a Member cannot attend an upcoming meeting they must send their apologies to the Parish Clerk with a supporting reason by 3pm on the day of the meeting. These apologies will be

² Local Government Act 1972, s.85(3)

³ Arnold Baker on Local Council Administration Ed. 11 Sc 7.15

⁴ Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 40

reported to the meeting and recorded in the minutes. Apologies must not be passed to the meeting via another Councillor.

4.3 A councillor can request formal approval for a period of leave of absence;

4.3.1 Any councillor whose absence from meetings is likely to extend to six months or more should request a leave of absence by writing to the Parish Clerk stating:

- a. the reasons for the absence
- b. the anticipated period of absence
- c. whether the councillor will be available to continue performing any Council functions during this period e.g. continuing to deal with ward matters by telephone or email
- d. Requests will normally be considered by full Council and should therefore be made in sufficient time, having regard to the programme of meetings, to allow this to happen before the period of six months expires.

4.4 Granting leave of absence;

4.4.1 Each request for a leave of absence will be considered on its own merits having regard to:

- a. the reasons for the proposed absence, from future meetings, and the extent to which this is unavoidable;
- b. the duration of the proposed absence;
- c. the extent to which the member will be able to continue carrying out any functions of a councillor notwithstanding their absence from meetings;
- d. the suitability of any alternative arrangements that are proposed for ensuring that a Councillor's duties continue to be fulfilled (e.g. representation on an outside body)

4.4.2 Requests for leave of absence will normally be granted in cases of:

- a. serious illness for periods up to 12 months in total
- b. maternal/paternal/adoptive/parental (for the equivalent period during which an employee of the Council would normally be entitled to leave)

4.4.3 A leave of absence may be granted for such period as the Council thinks is reasonable in all the circumstances. Once that leave of absence expires, the clock re-starts so far as s.85 is concerned and the councillor has a further six months in which to attend a meeting (or seek a further leave of absence).

Investment Policy

Introduction

HM Government has issued statutory guidance on local government investments, under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. Under that section, local authorities including Parish Councils are required to 'have regard' to 'such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue'.

The guidance states that for each financial year, a local authority should prepare at least one investment policy which should be approved by the full council and be made publicly available. The term 'investment' covers all financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit.

The guidance is effective for financial years commencing on or after 1st April 2018. It applies to Parish Councils whose investment surplus funds exceed or are expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year. Surplus funds are defined as funds not earmarked for specific projects or budgeted funds for planned expenditure.

Key Principles of the Policy

The Parish Council will have regard to the guidance as the Secretary of State has issued and may issue.

The policy is based on two major principles of security (protecting the Parish Council's funds from loss) and liquidity (ensuring funds are available when needed), plus a subsidiary principle of yield (where consistent with security and liquidity).

Borrowing by the Parish Council is regulated by law. The Council is not allowed to borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely to profit from investment of borrowed funds.

Investments Covered by the Guidance

For the purposes of the guidance, Financial Investments are financial assets comprising Specified Investments and Non-Specified Investments.

Specified Investments are denominated in sterling, provide a right of repayment within one year and are not classified as capital expenditure under HM Government regulations. They are made within bodies or schemes of high quality, which may include the UK Government, local authority or other Town/Parish Council.

Non-Specified Investments do not satisfy the Specified Investment criteria; therefore, they generally carry greater risk. The Parish Council does not make Non-Specified Investments.

For the purposes of the guidance, Non-Financial Investments are non-financial assets held primarily or partially to generate a profit.

The Parish Council considers that its non-financial assets do not qualify as investments because they are held solely for community and/or personal and/or operational reasons and not for any profit motive.

This does not obviate the need for the Parish Council to ensure a) it achieves value for money when acquiring or otherwise taking on a non-financial asset and b) it monitors asset values to ensure adequate insurance cover is maintained. Non-financial assets are listed in the Parish Council's asset register which supports insurance cover maintained by the Parish Council.

Management of Parish Council Specified Investments

The Parish Council's Specified Investments comprise of cash balances held in accounts with one or more recognised financial institutions.

The Parish Council maintain bank current accounts for making and receiving payments; the selected bank accounts need to meet the Parish Council's agreed operational and pricing requirements.

The Parish Council will hold one or more accounts for surplus funds.

Accounts will be selected according to the principles of security, liquidity and yield.

Security

The Parish Council will seek to protect surplus funds from loss by:

- Opening accounts only with institutions of high quality, making reference to relevant sources of financial, economic and ratings information
- Having regard to industry deposit protection schemes such as the Financial Services Compensation Scheme
- Eliminating exchange risk by holding all balances in sterling
- Making regular checks to ensure compliance with the relevant limits.

Surplus funds are defined as those funds which have not been earmarked for specific projects or budgeted funds for planned expenditure.

Liquidity

The Parish Council will seek to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet its expenditure commitments by holding surplus funds in accounts:

- From which transfers can easily be made to the Parish Council's current accounts (e.g. via online banking)
- Which require no more than 95 days' notice to withdraw funds
- Regular checks will be made to identify forthcoming payment requirements and to ensure appropriate funds are available.

Yield

When deciding to hold surplus funds, the Parish Council will consider what yields are available. It will seek to maximise yield as long as prudential objectives of security and liquidity are met.

Capacity, Skills and Culture

The Parish Council commits to ensuring that members and staff involved in decisions relating to and management of investments have the relevant capacity, skills and information to make informed decisions as to whether to enter into a specific investment, to evaluate individual investments in the context of strategic objectives and to understand the impact of decisions on the overall risk exposure of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will meet its commitment by providing training, using external advisers and reporting and communicating through appropriate communication channels.

Transparency and Democratic Accountability

This Investment Policy shall be reviewed each year and presented for approval to Full Council.

Proposals for any material changes during the year will be presented to Full Council for approval.

LSWA PC does not currently exceed the £100k threshold

APPRAISAL POLICY

Introduction

The Council recognises our appraisees are the most valuable asset. Regularly communicating job expectations and supporting staff development is critical for achieving a motivated and capable workforce.

As a small workforce, informal communications are encouraged and will take place on an ongoing basis between Clerk and team, discussing priorities and objectives. These meetings are not recorded.

The council supports an annual appraisal discussion, which will be recorded to enable:

- a) A structured and confidential discussion on work programme linked to Council objectives;
- b) The identification of achievements and to raise any concerns;
- c) Effective support and guidance;
- d) Discussions about training and development needs and individual aspirations;
- e) Recognition of good performance.

The Clerk (or the Chairman of HS&HR in the case of the Clerk) is responsible for ensuring the policy is followed; and for giving appraisees constructive, timely and honest appraisals of their performance, which should take into account both council and individual aims. The Clerk will ensure the process is monitored effectively and appraisees are expected to engage with all areas of the policy.

The council is committed to the principle of encouraging staff and councillors to enhance their role and qualifications by further training. All sponsored training must relate to the needs of the council, be relevant to an individual's job role and be subject to Council approval and is dependent on the availability of financial resources.

SCOPE

Informal communications will be held on a regular basis with all appraisees.

An annual appraisal will be provided to all staff, except new starters in a probation period. Where it is known that an appraisee is due to commence a long period of absence ie. Maternity leave, this will be factored into the objective timescales and where appropriate, an appraisal will be held before the absence starts. Where an appraisee misses a scheduled appraisal meeting due to sickness absence, it will be rearranged to take place following their return.

Any training for staff members is subject to council approval. The Council will consider the type of contracts staff are employed on in determining requests.

APPRAISAL

The council acknowledges that appraisals are important to enable staff to fulfil the duties outlined in their job description, their role objectives and feel fully supported by the Clerk or HR&HS committee Chairman in the case of the Clerk.

If an appraisee has any concerns about the appraisal process, they should discuss this with the Clerk initially or the HR&HS Committee Chairman in the case of the Clerk.

The appraisal will be held over a designated period, usually March, on an annual basis, as set by the Clerk in liaison with the HR&HS committee. The Councillor or Clerk will arrange meetings and give one week's notice when inviting appraisees. The appraisal form should be provided to the appraisee with the invite to allow time to reflect and prepare.

All appraisals will take place annually, in March, conducted by the Clerk or appointed Chairman in the case of the Clerk. This will be the Chair of Full Council and HR&HS Committee

The meeting should be held in a confidential environment that is free from interruption. The appraisal discussion will allow an opportunity for both the appraisee and Clerk/Councillor to reflect and comment on the previous year's objectives (linked to Job description and councils aims). It will praise achievement and encourage the appraisee within their role.

The meeting will set a reasonable number of objectives for the forthcoming year (aligned with council aims) and identify areas for development and improvement (i.e can improvements be made to the way tasks are carried out).

Any issues of concern/support requirements and training development needs should be discussed and written onto the form; to include future training requirements, planned qualifications, development opportunities and career planning.

It is important to be specific in terms of evidencing achievements and development needs. Any comments made by the appraiser or appraisee are to be constructive and should not be seen as a criticism.

At the meeting you will discuss each category on the form to aid any decisions on role performance.

If attendance or timekeeping relates to pregnancy or disability, advice should be sought from South Staffordshire Human Resources, on how to treat such episodes, in liaison with the HR Committee.

AFTER THE APPRAISAL MEETING

A copy of the appraisal form with comments will be made available to the appraisee.

The appraisals will be reported confidentially to the HR& HS Committee, unless there are any issues which should remain for the appraisee and appropriate line manager

The HR@HS committee, in liaison with appraisees will ensure any training, development and support requirements identified in the appraisal are considered.

APPEAL

Councillors, the Clerk and appraisees are asked to support their comments and opinions with factual examples and evidence if necessary. Should an appraisee believe they have not received a fair appraisal they should discuss this in the first place with the Clerk or Councillor who conducted the appraisal.

Should they remain dissatisfied, they have the right of appeal to the HR&HS Committee within 10 working days.

GENERAL

This policy is regarded as non-contractual and does not form part of any contract of employment.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four year term, or earlier if there are any material changes.

Risk Assessment & Management 2023/24

Risk is assessed as the product of the consequences of an event occurring and the probability that it will occur. Various risk scenarios are described and assessed subjectively according to the following guidelines:

Consequences

No	Rating	Description
1	Trivial	Minor cuts and bruises treated on site by first aid. Loss of <£10
2	Non serious	Cuts and bruises which need to be seen by a doctor/nurse. Loss of <£100
3	Serious	Minor injury which requires treatment as a hospital outpatient or Loss of £1,000
4	Very serious	Injury which requires treatment as an in patient or loss of <£10,000
5	Catastrophic	Serious, permanent disability or death or loss of <£100,000

Probability

No	Rating	Probability ratio
1	Almost impossible	1/1,000,000
2	Highly unlikely	1/10,000
3	Unlikely	1/1,000
4	Possible	1/100
5	Probable	1/10

The risk is classified as follows:

Risk	Description
1-5	Trivial, no action required
6-10	Tolerable
11-15	Moderate risk, wherever possible action should be taken to reduce the risk to a level that is as low as is reasonably practical.
16-20	High risk, action must be taken to reduce it to a level which is as low as is reasonable practical
21-25	Unacceptable risk. Activity should be discontinued unless it is possible to reduce the risk to an acceptable limit (12)

Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Christmas Lights				
Accident whilst being installed or post installation	5	1	5	Use specialist contractors who are experienced in this work. Require them to comply with Staffordshire County Council code of practice
Public making contact with dangerous electrical supplies	5	1	5	Use low voltage supplies for equipment less than 2.5 metres off ground. Restrict 240V bulbs to heights above 2.5 metres above ground.
Accident whilst stone circle is being removed to reveal the socket for the tree	4	1	4	Plate is removed by South Staffordshire Council workers who are experienced in removing the plate.
Public making contact with dangerous electrical supplies	5	1	5	Use low voltage supplies for equipment less than 2.5 metres off ground. Specialist contractors are to ensure safety of equipment
Tree falling due to extreme weather conditions	5	1	5	Parish Council Clerk, Chairman and Chair of CLWG will check the weather forecasts regularly and will arrange for the tree to be monitored and taken down (if required) if high wind (31-38mph) is predicted.
People walking into tree in village centre	1	2	2	Fencing around tree. Area well lit When the plate is removed the area is fenced off
Primrose Bank Children's Play Area				
Dangers of road nearby	5	3	15	Historic play area open on 2 sides to the road and traffic can see children moving around. The road is a cul-de-sac and the probability of cars travelling at excessive speed is low. Signs to be added advising of children playing Users are reminded that the PC do not hold responsibility for play
Dangers of canal nearby	5	2	10	Historic play area, canal some distance away, with a hedge, fencing and trees restrict access. Chicane fencing added to lower risk of children accessing the canal area Additional fencing added on boundary line Users are reminded that the PC do not hold responsibility for play
Injury using play equipment	3	2	6	Equipment recommended, supplied and installed by reputable supplier and complies with EN1176. RoSPA undertook post installation and undertake annual inspections. Play area checked regularly by Parish Council. Area is regularly litter picked. Sign erected with details of where to report problems. Users are reminded that the PC do not hold responsibility for play

Covid-19	1	3	1	See separate risk assessment for using play equipment. Covid in general circulation
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Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Employment & Staff with access to funds				
Injury to employees	4	2	8	The Parish Council works in a normal office environment with no additional hazards. A first aid kit is in the office and the office has been cleared of unnecessary items. The litter pickers are provided with a litter grab and gloves. They are required to adhere to the S Staffs Council policy on the disposal of drug related litter. The village orderly possesses a high-visibility jacket and has gloves and litter picker. A Health and Safety Policy is in place.
Parish Council Manager and Assistant Clerk Lone worker at risk	3	1	3	The Parish Council Clerk works in a secure office within a building operating swipe card entry. Visitors must call from the reception area and can be met in the public café area.
Litter Pickers and Village Orderly Lone worker at risk	4	2	8	The Village Orderly and litter pickers work outdoors alone and this should be re-assessed. Health and Safety training to be organised.
Employee could defraud Council	2	1	2	All cheques require three signatures of which one is the Parish Council Clerk. Internet payments require 2 councillors to independently authorise transactions as well as the Parish Council Clerk. A Councillor is appointed to undertake internal checks at regular intervals. Accounts are audited independently by an auditor and by an external auditor.
Risk of injury from mounting, relocation, Collection of Data and checking Mobile Vehicle Activated sign (MVAS)	3	1	3	Read the manual before moving the Speed Indicator Devi A minimum of two workmen, using safe lifting techniques to move the SID Use ladder of appropriate height securely-footed Hi-Vis jackets, appropriate footwear and gloves to be worn when moving the SID / Collecting Data and checking MVAS and Post Avoid moving the SID in wet weather conditions to avoid slips, trips and falls and in sunny conditions to avoid prolonged exposure to strong sunlight Be compliant with Manual Handling methods

Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Marston Road Playing Field, Play Equipment, Dog Walk and Youth Shelter				
Risk of dogs escaping dog walk into road or playing field.	4	21	4	Fences and hedging are checked regularly to identify gaps and fencing added when necessary. Fencing and gates have recently been replaced.
Risk of dogs being exercised on playing field.	4	3	12	Erect signs stating 'No Dogs' at access points. Remind residents in parish newsletter.
Risk of horses being exercised on playing field.	3	1	3	Erect signs stating 'No Horses' at access points. Staggered entrance means it is unlikely that a horse could physically enter the field.
Risk of accident due to mini motorcycles being used on the playing field.	4	1	4	More secure entrances and improved visibility should reduce the chance of motorcycles being used on the field. Additional posts installed in 2017 to prevent access
Risks generated by hirers using the playing field.	3	1	3	A hiring agreement is in place for users. There are currently no hirers of the field.
Risk from fires being lit at the playing field.	4	3	12	Erect signs stating 'No Fires' at access points. Visibility has recently been improved. This will hopefully reduce the chance of fires being lit.
Risk of injury from broken glass & litter at playing field and around youth shelter.	3	4	12	Area being regularly litter picked. Litter picker asked to collect glass where possible. The area is safety checked before and after each weekend.
Risk of injury falling from youth shelter	5	2	10	Equipment is not for climbing and is clearly a seating area, users reasonability to use the area appropriately
Risk of injury on skatepark.	3	2	6	Sign displayed insisting that helmets are worn, no cigarettes or glass bottles allowed. Emergency number to contact is also displayed. Weekly visual inspection and annual RoSPA inspection take place.
Risk of injury on play equipment	4	2	8	Sign displayed indicating age appropriateness of equipment. Weekly visual and annual RoSPA inspections take place. Emergency contact number is also displayed. Users are reminded that the PC do not hold responsibility for play
Risk of injury when exiting playing field.	5	1	5	Rural lane and volume of traffic is low. Entrance has been altered to avoid exiting onto the road.
Covid-19	1	3	1	See separate risk assessment for using play equipment

Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Other Parish Property				
Risk of damage to the bus shelter	2	1	2	Polycarbonate glass is installed Visual check is periodically undertaken Damage to be reported to the Parish Clerk immediately
Risk of damage to Lapley Telephone Kiosk	2	1	2	Site is regularly used by Express and Star to collect newspapers Area is visual to neighbours Damage is repaired as a matter of urgency CFR are responsible for checking and maintaining the defibrillator
CCTV				
Break down of equipment	2	1	2	Ensure an annual service is undertaken by SGS
Vandalism	1	1	1	Maintain effective security Laisse with enforcement agencies
Security	1	1	1	Arrange appropriate staff training Define responsibly for security/control of equipment Maintain asset register Make a provision for urgent repairs Maintain security of system
Data protection	4	1	4	Hold a copy of GDPR documents owned by SGS Keep policies up to date Implement a CCTV policy
Chain of office				
Loss/theft/fire/damage	2	1	2	Chairman responsibility Ensure chain is kept securely at Chairman's home When worn for ceremonial events the chain should not be left unattended if it is not on the Chairman's person Ensure Chain is adequately insured
Data Protection/ Freedom of Information				
GDPR Breach	4	2	8	Undertake regular audit if procedures Hold policies for dealing with data and breaches

Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Freedom of Information Requests	2	2	4	Keep FOI policy up to date Ensure legislation is up to date Keep vexatious complaints policy up to date
Defibrillators				
Risk of vandalism Risk of pads and batteries being out of date Risk of theft on defibrillator unit	5	2	10	WMAS are responsible for the maintenance and checking of all defibs in the parish LSWA pc will annually budget for the replacement of batteries and pads Hosting agreements are in place with the site owners An agreement is in place with WA CFRs for the up keep of the defibs Boxes are alarmed and CFRS notified if they sound