

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: of the Monthly Meeting held on 25 March 2024

PRESENT: Councillors P Warren (In the Chair), Mrs V Allen, J Ceiriog-Hughes, Mrs P Gregory, R Grevett, G Lee, Ms L Lloyd, Mrs S Partridge, Ms M Revell and D Rogers

In attendance: Mrs C Ward (Clerk of the Council)

56/24 CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Councillor Warren was appointed as Chairman of the Meeting.

57/24 THE LATE MR KEITH CROFT

The Clerk referred to the recent sad passing of Mr Keith Croft.

She also reported Mr Croft, who was the long-term partner of a member of the Council's personnel, Ms Julie Covey, had passed away suddenly on 19 March 2024. She said that Mr Croft had actively supported a number of local groups, clubs and organisations, including the Littlehampton District Lions Club and the Rustington-in-Bloom Committee, for many years, by assisting with Community Fundraising Events, including Race and Quiz Nights and many other associated occasions.

The Council conveyed its sincere condolences to Ms Covey and Mr Croft's family, and then observed a one-minute period of silence in memory of Mr Croft.

58/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett (Personal), Mrs Broomfield (Holiday), Broomfield (Holiday), Mrs Cooper (Indisposition), Cooper (Indisposition) and Tyler (Indisposition). These apologies were accepted by the Council.

59/24 RESIGNATION - COUNCILLOR GRAHAM TYLER

The Chairman of the Meeting reported the receipt of a letter of resignation, sent by Councillor Tyler's wife, on his behalf. He said that it was the intention for Councillor Tyler to resign with effect from 30 April 2024.

He then conveyed the contents of the letter to the Council and expressed his personal anguish and regret that Councillor Tyler would no longer be a Member, following 28 years of unceasing service, dedication and wholehearted commitment, via the Council, to the community of Rustington.

The Council NOTED this information with extreme sadness, but understanding and respect, and recorded its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Tyler for his invaluable commitment to the Council.

The Council also AGREED that the Chairman should write to Mrs Tyler, on behalf of the Council, conveying its sadness, together with its thanks and appreciation for Councillor Tyler's invaluable diligence and commitment throughout his time as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and a Member of the Council.

The Clerk advised that arrangements would be made, at the appropriate time, for this vacancy in the East Ward to be advertised in the local Press, on all of the Council's Notice Boards throughout the Village, and on the Council's Website, giving members of the public an opportunity to claim a By-Election.

She reminded the Council that if a By-Election was not called for by the due closing date, she would make arrangements for this vacancy to be advertised for filling via the co-option process.

The Council NOTED this information

60/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

61/24 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held 26 February 2024 were signed by the Chairman of the Meeting as a correct record.

62/24 **SUSSEX POLICE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Sergeant West and PCSO Raju.

(a) **Matters Arising**

The Clerk reported that she had nothing further to report in respect of the 'Romanian Beggar' at the present time.

She then referred to an incident of severe concern that had been brought to her attention earlier in the month both by Councillors Mrs Partridge and Mrs Cooper.

She said that the incident in question related to an attack on a 15-year-old girl by a group of girls at 4.45 pm on 17 March 2024 in Ascot Way, in the vicinity of the Little Stars Nursery Building. She said that the Police had been made aware of the incident immediately and she understood that they had been able to apprehend the perpetrators on the same day.

Councillor Mrs Partridge, echoed what the Clerk had reported and advised that she was unsure of whether anyone had been charged with the Assault.

The Council was most concerned to NOTE this information.

Councillor Lee then reported that Sergeant West and PCSO Raju had recently agreed to provide him with a synopsis of crimes in Rustington over the previous few weeks. He said that, overall, the level of crimes being committed was still very low.

The Council NOTED this information.

63/24 **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ms Edwards and Gunner.

Councillors Mrs Partridge and Ms Lloyd then reported, in their capacity as District Councillors, on an incident that they had been contacted about, whereby a Horse Box had been parked in Windmill Drive, causing an obstruction. They said that they had both visited the location and witnessed the offending vehicle inconsiderately parked, and had reported this to the Police.

The Council NOTED this information, and that the vehicle had subsequently been moved off of the road on to the owner's driveway.

The Council NOTED that in the absence of any other District Councillors, there was no further Report available for the Meeting.

64/24 **COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

The Clerk advised the Council that due to Councillor Mrs Cooper's absence there was no Report on County Council issues available for the Meeting. She said that Councillor Mrs Cooper had advised her that she would bring the Council up-to-date at the next Meeting.

65/24 **CLERK'S REPORT**

(a) **Littlehampton Concert Band - 2023 Community Carol Concert and Coronation Concert**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the Littlehampton Concert Band, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the donation of £300.00, awarded in recognition of its participation in the 2023 Community Carol Concert and Coronation Concert.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

(b) **Rustington Community Choir - 2023 Community Carol Concert**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the Rustington Community Choir, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the recent donation of £100.00 awarded in recognition of the Choir's participation in the 2023 Community Carol Concert.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

(c) **Financial Contribution towards Cricket Wicket Annual Maintenance - Rustington Cricket Club**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks and appreciation from the Rustington Cricket Club in respect of the Council's recent positive decision in respect of the future cost of the Cricket Wicket maintenance, together with the transfer of the Council's equipment to the Cricket Club.

The Council NOTED this information.

(d) **Woodlands Table Tennis Club - Discounted Hiring Fee**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the Woodlands Table Tennis Club, expressing its thanks to the Council for agreeing to a discounted fee for its weekly hirings for a further 12-month period with effect from 1 April 2024.

The Council NOTED this information.

(e) **Littlehampton and District Lions Club**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the Littlehampton District Lions Club, expressing its thanks and appreciation to the Council for its continued support for the Rustington Charity Street Fayre and Senior Citizens Luncheon and for agreeing to a discounted hiring fee for its forthcoming Quiz Night Event in aid of the RNLI's 200th Anniversary.

66/24 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman of the Meeting said that he had nothing to report at the present time, on behalf of the Chairman.

67/24 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Council NOTED the Report of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 26 February 2024.

68/24 **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 25 March 2024. (Verbal Report from the Chairman of the Meeting, Councillor Warren).

The Council RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 25 March 2024 be APPROVED.

69/24 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered a Report from the Clerk of the Council regarding the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit Arrangements for the preceding year.

The Council RESOLVED that the Report be APPROVED as the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit Arrangements for the preceding year. A copy of the Report is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

70/24 2024/2025 BUDGET

The Council NOTED the receipt of the Council's approved Budget for 2024/2025, copies of which had been previously circulated to all Members.

71/24 ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council reviewed the updated Risk Assessment Procedures as presented, and subsequently RESOLVED unanimously to take no action in respect of any further amendments to the procedures. A copy of these procedures is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

72/24 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

The Council reviewed the updated Council's Health and Safety Policy as presented, and RESOLVED to take no action in respect of any further amendments to this Policy at the present time. A copy of the Policy is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

73/24 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME 2009

The Council reviewed the Council's updated Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Model Publication Scheme as presented, and RESOLVED to take no further action in respect of any other amendments at the present time. A copy of the Model Publication Scheme is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

74/24 HOMEWORKING POLICY

The Council reviewed the Council's Homeworking Policy as presented, and RESOLVED to take no action in respect of any amendments to this Policy at the present time. A copy of the Policy is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

75/24 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated the draft Equality and Diversity Policy for the Council to adopt.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED to adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy as presented. A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

76/24 NUMBER 12 BUS SERVICE

(a) Statistics

The Council NOTED the Number 12 Bus Service Statistics for February 2024.

(b) Future of Council's financial support for the Service

The Clerk referred to Minute 44/24(b) and reminded Members that she had circulated further email correspondence in this regard.

She said that, following the last Meeting, she had conveyed the Council's decision to withdraw its financial support for the Number 12 Bus Service with effect from 31 May 2024, to the Managing Director of Compass Travel. He had responded by advising that he was very disappointed to receive notification of the Council's decision and, in particular, at the funding withdrawal date of 31 May 2024, as it didn't give the Company much notice. He then asked if the Council could consider a proposal to continue the No. 12 Service until 31 August 2024, which would work better for both his Company and the Public. It would also give him time to explore the possibility of getting other Councils, including Littlehampton Town Council, Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council, to contribute towards the ongoing costs, which would mean that the Council's contribution could be reduced.

He confirmed that if the Council was willing to agree to the above proposal, he was prepared to reduce the price to £2,500.00 per month for the extra three months (£30,000.00 per annum). If he was unable to secure any additional funding, then he would withdraw the service with effect from 31 August 2024.

The Clerk then advised that East Preston Parish Council was due to consider a proposal from its Community Engagement Committee to financially support the No. 12 Service until 31 August 2024.

Following a detailed discussion, the Council RESOLVED that its original decision to withdraw financial support for the Number 12 Bus Service with effect from 31 May 2024, should not be changed in any way.

Councillor Rogers said that he believed the Council should now explore any community transport options that might be able to provide residents with a way of accessing the popular destinations on the No. 12 Route from the Village Centre, namely The Wave Leisure Centre, Rustington and Manor Retail Parks and, if possible, the Tesco Store, Littlehampton.

It was AGREED that consideration should be given to the setting up of a Working Party to be tasked with exploring community transport options as detailed above, at the next Meeting.

77/24 THE WOODLANDS CENTRE - PROPOSED MAJOR REDESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Clerk referred to Minute 45/24 and said that the Planning Application had now been lodged with the local Planning Authority, and this had now been issued with a closing date for comments of 20 April 2024, with the decision due to be made by 13 May 2024.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

78/24 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY - 6 JUNE 2024

The Clerk referred to Minute 46/24 and said that she had nothing further to report, other than to confirm that there were no additional Commemorative Events being held at The Woodlands Centre.

She then asked if Councillors could call Nicky or Jo in the Council Offices to reserve their tickets for the Concert prior to 1 May 2024, when they will be being released to members of the public.

The Council NOTED this information.

79/24 RUSTINGTON AND DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Clerk referred to Minute 14/24 and advised that she had met with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Councillors Mrs Cooper and Rogers, and had subsequently formally notified her counterpart and the Mayor in Künzell that the Twinning Association had been dissolved.

She said that she had also advised them that the Council had set up a Working Party which had been tasked with communicating with the Twinning Partners in Künzell to consider the best way forward, without the support of the Association. She confirmed that she had told them that the Council would welcome their views in respect of the existing formal partnership, which the Council was happy to continue with. She had also informed them that whilst the Council was happy to give its support to any single events and/or activities that might emerge as a result of individual contacts between residents of the two communities, it would be unable to commit to organising and hosting any major activities, at the present time.

She reported that she had received a response from the Mayor, stating that whilst it was a great pity, the dissolution of the Twinning Association had not come as a great surprise. They had advised that they were very interested in continuing the partnership and would provide any support that they could, they completely understood the Council's position, and would wait to hear further from the Council in this regard, but would not be approaching it with any major event requests in the near future.

She said that she planned to convene another Meeting with the above-mentioned Councillors, to discuss the response received and the possibilities going forward, in the near future.

**80/24 WOODLAND PARK SPORTSFIELD - REQUEST FOR INSTALLATION OF
ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY BUILDING**

The Clerk reported that she had previously circulated a letter from the Secretary of the Rustington Otters Youth Football Club, thanking the Council for its continuing support and asking for the Council's permission to install a second wooden Summer House within the already fenced off compound at the Woodland Park Sportsfield.

The Clerk reminded the Council that the County Council as the Landowner would need to be approached for formal permission, prior to any further action being taken by the Club.

Following a brief discussion, it was AGREED that whilst the Council had no objection to an additional temporary building being installed within the fenced-off compound at the Sportsfield, it would like to approach the County Council in this regard in the first instance, in due course, once the new Lease had been granted.

**81/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - NOMINATION FOR AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY
VALUE - RUSTINGTON LIBRARY, CLAIGMAR ROAD, RUSTINGTON**

The Clerk advised the Council that she had previously circulated an email received from the Local Land Charges & Property Gazetteer Officer advising that the Council had again assessed the nomination of the Library as an Asset of Community Value and had decided that it met the criteria for listing and had, therefore, been approved.

She said that the property would remain on the list for a maximum period of five years from 12 March 2024, with a charge being placed on the Local Land Charges Register as well as the Land Registry.

The Council NOTED this information.

82/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - LOCAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The Clerk reported that she had previously circulated an email received from the PA to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, advising that the Council, at its Meeting on 13 March 2024, had approved some amendments to the Local Assessment Procedure, which outlined how they would consider Code of Conduct complaints.

She said that the main change was that the Monitoring Officer now had 30 working days, instead of 20, in which to carry out the initial assessment.

The Council NOTED this information.

83/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - STREET TRADING CONSENT - LICENCE
APPLICATION NUMBER: 119478 - LITTLEHAMPTON DISTRICT LIONS CLUB

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from the Environmental Health Department, together with details of a Licence Application for an Occasional Markets and Events Trading Consent in respect of the required road closure and street trading consent for the Rustington Street Fayre. The applicant was the Littlehampton District Lions Club.

Following a brief discussion, the Council AGREED to take no further action in respect of this Application.

84/24 RAMPION 2 - EXAMINATION INPUT FROM SUSSEX COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from The Secretary, Protect Coastal Sussex (PCS), together with three written representations prepared by Sussex community organisations, which had been input to the Rampion 2 Examination Authority in this regard.

The Council NOTED this information.

85/24 SOLAR PANELS - REACH (RENEWABLE ENERGY ACCESS FOR COMMUNITIES AND HOUSEHOLDS) PROJECT

Councillor Lee referred to Minute 53/24 and said that he had attended the community event on 12 March 2024.

He then gave a brief synopsis of the Meeting and said that, subsequently, as the Group was happy for Rustington to become involved in the Project, joining the Angmering and East Preston Parish Councils, Councillor Alan Evans from Angmering Parish Council had offered to attend a Council Meeting to explain what Renewable Energy Access for Communities and Households (REACH) involved, and how the Council might get involved.

Following a brief discussion, the Council AGREED that Councillor Evans should be asked to make a brief Presentation at the next Meeting of the Council on 22 April 2024.

86/24 RUSTINGTON SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Rogers reported on his attendance at a Meeting of the Rustington Sports and Social Club Management Committee on 20 March 2024.

He said that the Club was pleased that the Council had supported its Planning Application for an extension to the building, to enable a new Female Changing Room to be accommodated, and that the Cricket Club representative at the Meeting had expressed thanks and appreciation for the Council's continuing support.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

87/24 COMMERCIAL BANNERS - BROADMARK PARADE

Councillor Rogers referred to the increasing number of commercial banners that were being displayed on the barriers along Broadmark Parade, and expressed his concern that this might not be authorised by the County Council.

The Clerk said that this would be reported to the Highways Department at the County Council, along with photographs of the offending banners at the present time.

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications previously circulated for Members' information:-

- (a) British Regional Transport Association (BRTA) Newsletter No. 54
- (b) CAGNE - March Bulletin and New Runway Update
- (c) Carers Support West Sussex - Latest News - 26 February 2024
- (d) Chestnut Tree House - Meet Nicola: Living life to the fullest, one adventure at a time
- (e) Chestnut Tree House - Last chance! Our - Spring Raffle closes in 48 hours
- (f) CPRE - Campaigns Update - March 2024
- (g) CPRE - Friend, join our call for a countryside everyone can afford to live in
- (h) East Preston Parish Council News - 29 February 2024, 7 March 2024, 13 March 2024 and 21 March 2024
- (i) Healthwatch West Sussex - Priorities for Healthwatch West Sussex
- (j) National Association of Local Councils - Chief Executive's Bulletin - 29 February 2024 and 14 March 2024
- (k) National Association of Local Councils - NALC Events - 5 March 2024
- (l) National Association of Local Councils - Newsletter - 28 February 2024, 7 March 2024, 13 March 2024 and 20 March 2024
- (m) RHS Communities - Growing projects to get involved with this Spring
- (n) RHS Communities - Wild About Gardens is back!
- (o) RHS Communities - The Big Seed Sow is back!
- (p) South East Employers (SEE) Newsletter - March 2024
- (q) St Barnabas House - Using art to cope with grief
- (r) St Barnabas House - Remember loved ones this Mother's Day
- (s) St Barnabas House - Night to Remember returns: join us to light up the night!
- (t) Stonepillow - March 2024 Newsletter
- (u) Turning Tides - Embrace Adventure with a 2024 Challenge!
- (v) West Sussex County Council - Residents' eNewsletter - March 2024
- (w) West Sussex County Council - News Release - 27 February 2024, 5 March 2024, 7 March 2024, 11 March 2024, 19 March 2024, 22 March 2024 x2 and 25 March 2024
- (x) West Sussex County Council - West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service - News Release - 8 March 2024 and 13 March 2024

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications received for Members' information:-

- (a) CPRE - Countryside Voices - Spring/Summer 2024

There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.

Chairman:

Date:

There were no questions received either preceding, or at, the Meeting for consideration during the Public Question Time, held prior to the commencement of the formal proceedings.

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL - 25 MARCH 2024

Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit Arrangements

1. Members are reminded that an Annual Review of the effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit has to be undertaken as part of the external Audit. Confirmation that such a Review has taken place is required as part of the Annual Report - Annual Governance Statement.
2. The role of the Internal Auditor is to provide an independent and objective opinion on the Council's risk management, control and governance by evaluating their effectiveness.
3. The Council's Internal Auditors have, again, over the past twelve months, carried out the end of year Audit for the financial year 2022/2023, and also the Interim Audit for the current financial year, 2023/2024 (copies attached). A copy of April Skies Accounting Terms of Reference and Audit Plan used for the Internal Audit is also attached for Members' information.
4. The end of year Audit, for the 2023/2024 financial year, will be carried out on 24 May 2024, following the completion of the Council's final accounts. The Internal Auditor's Report in this regard will be placed before the Council for consideration as soon as practicably possible following its receipt.
5. In accordance with the above, I would suggest that the Council, once again, considers the aforementioned Reports to review the effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit procedure over the past twelve months.
6. From these Reports, it is evident that the appointed Internal Auditor provides a most professional service, comprehensively recording and documenting all of the Council's accounting systems and internal controls. Any issues requiring review, improvement or updating, have been highlighted and, wherever possible addressed, with the aim of improving the systems currently in place.
7. The Internal Auditor's findings can also reassure the Council that its financial controls are all in order and continue to be independently monitored on a regular basis.
8. I would, therefore, recommend that the Council, once it has considered the attached documents, approves this Report as its Annual Review of the Internal Audit's effectiveness over the past twelve months.

18 March 2024

Clerk of the Council

Caroline Harris
Rustington Parish Council

1 June 2023

Dear Caroline

Rustington Parish Council
Internal Audit 2022-23

The internal audit of Rustington Parish Council for the 2022-23 financial year is now complete. I am pleased to be able to report that I have signed off the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2022-23 with no comments.

As stated in the engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year.

In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements and management information – that is the job of external audit.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These control assertions are set out below, together with the results of my internal audit work for 2022-23. Recommendations are set out at Appendix A. At Appendix B I list tests not completed as they are not relevant to Rustington.

The audit was carried out in two stages. The interim audit was carried out remotely on 15 November 2022, this concentrated on in year financial transactions and governance controls. I visited Rustington for the final audit on 30 May 2023. This concentrated on the statement of accounts and transactions from the second half of the financial year.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

A: Books of Account

Interim Audit

The Council uses the Sage 50 system for accounting and payroll. I have tested the brought forward balances on Sage at 1.4.22 against the audited prior year annual return and can confirm these have been brought forward correctly. Box 7 on the audited accounts for 21-22 was £477,220. This agrees to the period 0 balance sheet on Sage.

Reconciliations tested were up to date at the time of the audit. The cashbook was also up to date, and referencing on Sage was sufficiently detailed to enable me to locate supporting documentation.

I have confirmed that the Council's VAT returns are up to date, with the most recent claim for the 2 months to 30 September 2022, submitted to HMRC on 4.11.22. I checked that balances in the return could be agreed to schedules produced by the accounting system. The VAT claim was submitted using Sage digital submission process. The VAT claimed was £9,872, this agreed to the VAT control account at 30.9.22.

The Council is currently working through proposals to carry out refurbishment of the Woodland Centre. Given the level of expenditure involved, it would be sensible to obtain VAT advice from a sector specialist to ensure the Council makes correct VAT decisions .

I checked access controls to the Council's accounting system. Three officers have access to Sage. I was able to confirm that all access levels were appropriate for the officers concerned.

I have no recommendations in this area.

Final Audit

The accounting statements have been agreed back to balance sheet and profit and loss reports produced from the Sage Accounting system. All comparatives reported in the financial statements have been agreed back to the audited 2021-22 accounts, as published on the Council website. I note from this work that the Council currently codes contractor expenditure to salaries ledger codes on sage, then has to complete a manual exercise at year end to transfer this expenditure to non-pay expenditure on the accounting statements. Going forward, salary nominals on Sage should only be used to record costs relating to the employment of Council staff.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

The Council's year end VAT return has been completed, and VAT reclaimed can be agreed to a schedule of transactions extracted from Sage . The VAT return has been submitted to HRMC. Vat reclaimed was £11,800, this was repaid to the Council on 15 May 2023. , this agrees to the VAT nominal on the Trial Balance. I note that the Council commissioned the Parkinson Partnership to carry out a review of the Council's partial exemption calculation as a result of a recommendation raised at my last audit. This generated a VAT reclaim, and reduced the VAT payable by the Council in future years.

The Council reviewed my interim audit report at the November 2022 meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee – minute 89.22. Minutes confirm proper review of the report, and implementation of an action plan to respond to recommendations raised.

I have no recommendations in this area.

B: Financial Regulations & Payments
Interim Audit

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were reviewed at Governance and Audit Committee in February 2022. The Rustington documents are based on NALC templates. (Minute 40/22 for standing orders, Minute 41/22 for Financial Regulations.)

The Council has a well ordered process for making payments to suppliers. Invoices are sent into the office, these are collated with purchase orders and goods received notes by the finance team. Invoices are checked by the RFO, then loaded on to Sage and coded to an appropriate nominal ledger code. Twice a month a payment batch report is prepared on Sage. This is sent to the Chairman / Vice Chairman and Clerk for approval to pay. Once the batch is approved, the payments are loaded on to the Council's bank account by the RFO, who also approves the payments at bank. Payments are then reported to Council meetings and this is minuted.

I selected a sample of 10 transactions from the cashbook for the period April to September 2022. I was able to confirm for all transactions that:

- Transactions could be agreed back to invoice
- Clerk and once councillor had certified the invoice as ready for payment
- Invoice included in a payment run document, authorised by Clerk plus one councillor, in line with financial regulation requirements
- VAT accounting correct
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council
- Payment set up a and authorised at bank by RFO.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Whilst this is a robust system for making payments and demonstrates that the Council is following financial regulations, I have 2 recommendations to raise:

- The Council is overdependent on the RFO for the payment process, and there is insufficient separation of duties for some transactions (RFO raises PO, checks transaction and authorises payment at bank.) I recommend that the Council sets up a system of dual authorisation for payments on the Council's bank accounts. This should require 2 signatories on all transactions, one to set up the payment, one to authorise.
- There are insufficient numbers of bank signatories with working online authorisation access to the bank accounts. The Council could have issues paying staff and suppliers if RFO and Clerk were not available. Additional signatories should be set up with access to authorise payments.

However, I am satisfied that the Council is meeting this control objective.

Final Audit

Non pay expenditure per box 6 to the accounts amounted to £500,392, up from £422,785 in 2021-22.

I tested 5 further expenditure transactions, selected at random from cashbooks for months 6-12. All transactions were agreed from cashbook to invoice. I confirmed the following for all transactions tested:

- Transactions could be agreed back to invoice
- Clerk and one councillor had certified the invoice as ready for payment
- VAT accounting correct
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council
- Purchase order in place and signed off by appropriate signatory

I followed up my interim audit recommendation regarding authorisation of payments at bank. The Council is in the process of changing the payment process now the new Council is in place. Going forward, RFO will set up payments on the Council bank account, one of three signatories will then authorise the payment at bank. This is a more robust system, with a clear separation of duties in the payment authorisation process.

I reviewed year end accruals. I identified 3 transactions incorrectly set up as accruals, as the goods / services had not been received before 31 March. These were essentially budget underspends which had been set up as accruals.

- £50K - Changing Place Toilets
- £25K - section 106 Funding
- £10K - building improvement fund.

☎ 07958 990310

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The RFO reversed these accruals on completion of my audit, the impact of this was to increase the value of reserves at 31.3.23. The Council may wish to set up earmarked reserves to ensure that these funds are available for the intended purpose.

C: Risk Management & Insurance
Interim Audit

I will review the risk assessment at my year end audit. I remind the Council to ensure that the risk assessment is discussed at a meeting of Full Council before 31 March and that this review is minuted.

The Council is in year three of a 3-year deal insured with Hiscox, arranged by Gallgahers on a standard local government policy . I have seen the insurance policy; insurance was in date “ continuous cover from 1.10.22 until the policy is cancelled”. Fidelity insurance is set at £250K. Whilst this may appear too low, given the cash and investment holdings at the Council, the Council has obtained guidance from the brokers confirming that this level of insurance is sufficient. This is because much of the Council’s cash is held in difficult to access deposit accounts. Asset cover appeared consistent with the asset register. 6 buildings are insured, at an insurance value of £3.7m

I confirmed that back up of data on the Sage system is taken around twice a week . This is stored in the Y drive on the Council network. The IT provider has confirmed that this drive is included in the Council’s data back-up routines.

I confirmed that the most recent internal audit report was properly considered by Councillors at the May meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee and an appropriate minute recorded (minute 37/22).

Final audit

The Council Risk Assessment was reviewed at the Full Council on 27 March 2003 – minute 73/23.

I reviewed the risk assessment. There is clear evidence of review and update in the course of the financial year. The finance section of the risk assessment is based on an industry standard template and includes risks anticipated at a Council of this size.

I am satisfied that the Council is meeting this control objective.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

D. Budget, Precept & Reserves

Interim Audit

The Council is the process of preparing the budgets for 23-24. The RFO has shared the budget timetable with me. The draft budgets are being reviewed by committees at present. Precept and Budget is due to be approved at Full Council on 19 December. There is a back up meeting at the end of January 2023. All precepting authority deadlines should therefore be met.

I have confirmed that regular budget monitoring reports are to monthly Full Council. I have reviewed files and confirmed that reports were issued for October / May and August 2022, so I am satisfied budget monitoring is occurring regularly. I reviewed the report for the year to 17 October 2022. The report is comprehensive, giving analysis by nominal centre on a departmental basis. I reviewed the budget, there were no material overspends at this point. I have one recommendation. There is scope for a short narrative report to be added to the budget monitoring booklet to set out key messages and explain any significant variances.

Final Audit

Reserves at 31 March 2022 were £485,925 (2021-22 £477,220).

The Council held a general reserve of £160K on 31.3.23. This represents 23% of precept, and is therefore at the lower end of recommended levels in the JPAG Practitioners' Guide. The Council must maintain a close eye on reserve balances in the course of 23-24 to ensure that the general reserve does not fall below this level.

Labelling of earmarked reserves on the balance sheet should be amended, as it is not clear what the purpose of the reserve is. The largest reserves are described as follows:

- Capital reserve 1 - £100,000
- Capital reserve 2 - £106,947

The Council approved the budget and precept for 23-24 at the Full Council meeting on 23 January 2023, after consideration at the December Finance and General Purposes Committee. A detailed budget has been prepared and is loaded on to the Sage accounting system, ready for budget monitoring in 23-24.

I am satisfied that this control objective was met.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

E: Income **Interim Audit**

The Council obtains income from a number of sources beyond the annual precept:

- Room Hire and Functions - Woodland Centre / Youth Centre / Samuel Wickens Centre
- Sponsored flower beds
- Allotments
- Sports pitches

I confirmed fees and charges for 22-23 had been properly approved at meetings of the Council

- Sports Pitches – Leisure and Amenities November 2021
- Woodlands Centre - Leisure and Amenities November 2021

Invoices for hall bookings are generated from the Council's diary system. I tested a sample of bookings in the diary, through to invoicing, for the month of September. For all diary bookings tested, I confirmed the event occurred, and checked that the customer had been invoiced

- At the correct rate, as approved by Council
- For the correct amount of time, per the booking

I was able to confirm correct invoicing for all transactions audited.

The room booking process is manual, and there is no link to the Council's accounting system. The Council may wish to consider investing in a room booking system which interfaces into Sage Accounts.

I reviewed the Council's debtors ledger. At the time of my audit debts outstanding were £4.5K. There were no debts older than September 2022.

The Council still offers the option of payment by cheque or cash. This should be removed from standard terms and conditions, and only offered in exceptional circumstances. Management of cash and cheques is time consuming and will become more difficult as bank closures continue. Payments from customers should be made by card or bank transfer wherever possible. The Council should also consider moving allotment rental collection to an annual direct debit.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

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The Council has received a number of payments relating to a Halloween event held in the village, it is understood these were for stalls at the event. However, no fees were agreed by the Council in advance of the event, and the RFO was not consulted to ensure VAT was included in charges. Going forward, fees for all one off events must be agreed in advance, following consultation with the RFO.

Final Audit

Precept per box 2 to the accounts was £690,000 (21-22 £690,000). This has been agreed to third party documentation provided by central government.

Income per box 3 to the accounts was £184,744 (21-22 £131,184).

I followed up recommendations raised at my interim audit in November:

- The Council is in the process of setting up the Hallmaster booking system to replace the manual booking system
- Hire agreements have been amended to remove the option to pay by cash or cheque
- Deposits are now collected by bank payment where possible
- Allotment income is still under review

No further transaction testing was completed, sufficient assurance obtained at the interim audit. I am satisfied that this control objective was met.

F. Petty Cash

Petty cash is held at the office, museum and information centre. Books and receipts are brought into the office every month. The RFO confirmed that all petty cash accounts were counted at year end, but that this count was not evidenced on petty cash books. Whilst the amount held as petty cash was small (£90 in total) all counts should be signed off by the officer carrying out the count and reviewed and signed by another officer.

G. Payroll

Final Audit

Staff costs per box 4 to the accounts were £365,644 (21-22 £329,730). Payroll is processed in house by the RFO using SAGE payroll. Payroll is prepared mid-month in advance of payroll date on 25th of each month. The payroll is then reviewed by the Clerk and a councillor before payment, this is evidenced on the front page of payroll reporting.

I carried out testing of salary payments made to staff in February 2023. I agreed ledger payments back to summary payroll reporting for the month. From there I selected 2 staff members. (Clerk and RFO)

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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I tested that basic pay per payroll could be reconciled back to appropriate NJC pay grade, once working hours adjustments had been made. I also confirmed payments had been made to HMRC and to the Pension Fund for March 2022 by reviewing BACS file documentation in the payroll file. I am satisfied that the Council is meeting this control objective.

H. Assets and Investments

Final Audit

Fixed assets per box 9 to the accounts were £ 3,092,101 (21-22 £3,081,610).

I have agreed the balance in the accounts back to the asset register. The asset register appears complete and to record assets at cost or proxy cost, as required by regulations, with sufficient detail to locate all assets listed. Changes in asset register value year on year are supported by schedules of assets added and removed from the asset register, again at cost.

Additions of £27,355 were added to the register. The RFO has supplied a list of new assets – these appear to be added at cost, as required by the Practitioners' Guide. Largest items are the CCTV system , and the Ford Transit Van

One disposal has been made – this is the correction of an error on the asset register due to the double counting of the tractor owned by the Council - £16,685.

It is recommended that a validation exercise of the Council asset register is carried out in 23-24, to ensure that all assets still exist, and to ensure that assets can be located from descriptions on the asset register.

I am satisfied that the asset register can be reconciled to the fixed asset balance recorded in the accounts.

I: Bank Reconciliations

Interim Audit

Reconciliations for all bank accounts are carried out regularly and in accordance with regulations. This is clearly evidenced in the Council's bank reconciliation file. The October 2022 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following.

- The face of the bank statements had been signed off by the reviewing councillor, Councillor Warren
-

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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- All balances on the bank reconciliation were agreed back to bank statements / cashbooks
- Arithmetic checked for accuracy
- I confirmed that the bank reconciliations are reported to councillors in the monthly accounts for payment report.

Final Audit

Cash per box 8 to the accounts was £548,731 (21-22 £559,246)

I reperformed the year end bank reconciliations, and was able to agree balances on bank reconciliations back to bank statements and to the Sage accounting system. Arithmetic was checked and a sample of unrepresented items was checked to clearance at bank in the new financial year.

All year end reconciliations had been reviewed by Councillor Warren by the time of my audit and this review evidenced. There is clear evidence that all bank balances have been checked by the reviewing councillor and the bank statements have been initialled

J. Year-end accounts

Final Audit

RPC has produced accounts on an accruals basis, this is required as income / expenditure is above £200k. A reconciliation between Box 7-8 of the accounts has been prepared, for external audit review, and creditor and debtor listings support this reconciliation.

An explanation of year-on-year variances has also been prepared and provides detailed explanations for review by external audit.

I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

L: Exercise of Public Rights - Inspection of Accounts

Inspection periods for 2021-22 accounts were set as follows

Inspection - Key date	2021-22 Actual
Accounts approved at Full Council	23 May
Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published	5 June - website
Inspection period begins	6 June
Inspection period ends	15 July
Correct length	Yes 30 working days

All regulatory requirements were met.

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

L: : The Authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements

As a larger Council, with income / expenditure in excess of £200K, RPC is required to follow the 2015 Transparency Code. I was able to confirm that data required by the Code could be located at various pages on the Council website, and specifically confirmed that the following information was up to date

- Grants awarded – These are listed on the financial transparency webpage . I confirmed 22-23 webpage was up to date at my final audit
- The Council publishes a suite of financial reports monthly on the financial transparency page on the website. This includes details of all payments approved each month . This had been updated to March 2023 at the time of my final audit.

I am satisfied the Council has met obligations in this regard.

N: Publication requirements 21-22 AGAR

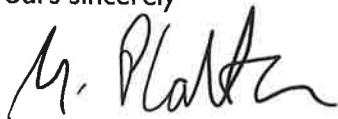
The Council has published the Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the external audit certificate on the Council website. The Conclusion of Audit Certificate was published 22 September 2022 before the statutory deadline of 30 September. The external auditors issued a clear audit certificate on 9 September. The Council has met its obligations in this area. The Council was informed of the outcome of the audit at the meeting on 26 September 2022 (minute 228/22)

O. Trusteeship

The Council disclosed that it was not a sole trustee for a trust fund in the 2021-22 AGAR. The RFO confirms this is still the case.

I attach my invoice for your consideration, alongside the internal audit report from the AGAR. Thanks for your help with the audit and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Appendix A

Matters Arising 22-23 Interim Audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
The Council is currently working through proposals to carry out refurbishment of the Woodland Centre.	Given the level of expenditure involved, it would be sensible to obtain VAT advice from a sector specialist to ensure the Council makes correct VAT decisions .	VAT consultant employed by the Council, reviewed partial exemption calculation and will be engaged for woodland centre project.
The Council is overdependent on the RFO for the payment process, and there is insufficient separation of duties for some transactions (RFO raises PO, checks transaction and authorises payment at bank.)	I recommend that the Council sets up a system of dual authorisation for payments on the Council's bank accounts. This should require 2 signatories must sign in for all transactions, one to set up the payment, one to authorise.	Now being actioned – panel of three signatories to authorise payments set up by RFO
There are insufficient numbers of bank signatories with working online authorisation access to the bank accounts.	The Council could have issues paying staff and suppliers if RFO and Clerk were not available. Additional signatories should be set up with access to authorise payments.	being actioned now new council in place – RFO to set up payments at bank, 1 of 3 signatories to authorise.
The budget monitoring report is comprehensive, giving analysis by nominal	There is scope for a short narrative report to be added to the budget monitoring report to set out key messages	Now in place

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

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centre on a departmental basis.	and explain any significant variances.	
The room booking process is manual, and there is no link to the Council's accounting system.	The Council may wish to invest in a room booking system	Hallmaster booking system being implemented
The Council still offers the option of payment by cheque or cash. This should be removed from standard terms and conditions, and only offered in exceptional circumstances. Management of cash and cheques is time consuming and will become more difficult as bank closures continue.	Payments from customers should be made by card or bank transfer wherever possible. The Council should also consider moving allotment rental collection to an annual direct debit.	Now implemented - see notes in report
Grants awarded – Details of grants awarded are not currently listed on the website.	These should be added, setting out detail of grant, beneficiary and purpose of grant.	Now added to website
The Council has received a number of payments relating to a Halloween event held in the village, it is understood these were for stalls at the event. However, no fees were agreed by the Council in advance of the event, and the RFO was not consulted to ensure VAT was included in charges.	Going forward, fees for all one off events must be agreed in advance, following consultation with the RFO	Noted for future events

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Matters Arising 22-23 Final Audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
<p>I reviewed year end accruals. I identified 3 transactions incorrectly set up as accruals, as the goods / services had not been received before 31 March. These were essentially budget underspends which had been set up as accruals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £50K - Changing Place Toilets • £25K - section 106 Funding • £10K - building improvement fund. 	<p>The RFO reversed these accruals on completion of my audit, the impact of this was to increase the value of the general fund at 31.3.23. The Council may wish to set up earmarked reserves to ensure that these funds are available for the intended purpose.</p>	
<p>Earmarked reserves – reporting on balance sheet</p>	<p>Labelling of earmarked reserves on the balance sheet should be amended, as it is not clear what the purpose of the reserve is.</p>	
<p>The RFO confirmed that all petty cash accounts were counted at year end, but that this count was not evidenced on petty cash books as part of year end closedown. by the officer carrying out the count and reviewed and signed by another officer.</p>	<p>Whilst the amount held as petty cash was small (£90 in total) all counts should be signed off.</p>	
<p>Asset Register</p>	<p>It is recommended that a validation exercise of the Council asset register is carried out in 23-24, to</p>	

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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	ensure that all assets still exist, and to ensure that assets can be located from descriptions on the asset register.	
The Council currently codes contractor expenditure to salaries ledger codes on sage, then has to complete a manual exercise at year end to transfer this expenditure to non pay expenditure on the accounting statements.	Going forward, salary nominals on Sage should only be used to record costs relating to the employment of Council staff.	

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Appendix B

Internal Audit Control Objectives – Marked as not covered

Control Objective	Area for Audit	Why this has not been audited
K	Exemption from limited assurance review	Council had limited assurance review in 22-23
O	Trust Funds	No trusts at this council

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Caroline Harris
Rustington Parish Council

3 November 2023

Dear Caroline

Rustington Parish Council
Interim Internal Audit 23-24

Following the interim audit completed on 1 November, I attach my report for consideration by the Council. This was the first of two audits I intend to carry out to support my opinion on the 23-24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). I covered the following at this visit:

- Review of opening balances and reporting of 22-23 audit opinion
- Follow up previous recommendations
- Testing of expenditure first 6 months of financial year
- Testing of income – first 6 months of financial year
- Risk management and insurance
- Budget monitoring reports
- Arrangements for inspection of accounts
- Bank reconciliations.

I am pleased to report that the Council has successfully maintained a satisfactory system of financial control. I have recommendations for improvement, these are at Appendix A.

I must report that I will not be able to sign off one control objective in 23-24:

Ref	Internal Audit Control Objective	Reason I have not signed off that the Council is compliant
M	Arrangements for Inspection of Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inspection period too long in 22-23- Inspection notice same date as meeting where AGAR was approved

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all members to support and inform them when they are considering the Authority's approval of the annual governance statement. I am required by Section 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These control assertions are set out below, together with the results of testing carried out at the interim audit.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

A: Books of Account

Interim Audit

The Council uses the Sage 50 system for accounting and payroll. I have tested the brought forward balances on Sage at 1.4.23 against the audited prior year annual return and can confirm these have been brought forward correctly. Box 7 on the audited accounts for 22-23 was £485,928. This agrees to the period 0 balance sheet on Sage.

Reconciliations tested were up to date at the time of the audit. The cashbook was also up to date, and referencing on Sage was sufficiently detailed to enable me to locate supporting documentation.

The Council's most recent VAT return was for the three months to the end of June 2023. VAT of £12,213 was reclaimed, this was paid in to the Council's bank account on 11 August 2023. I checked that balances in the return could be agreed to schedules produced from the accounting system. The next VAT claim, for the period of July to September 2023 is being worked on at present and is due to be submitted by mid-November.

The Council is currently working through proposals to carry out refurbishment of the Woodland Centre. I understand that this will require a PWLB loan. I remind the Council to ensure that VAT advice is sought before the project commences, to ensure most efficient VAT accounting arrangements are put in place. The RFO confirmed that this will be followed up with the Parkinson Partnership.

I have no recommendations in this area.

B: Financial Regulations & Payments

Interim Audit

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were reviewed at Governance and Audit Committee in February 2022. The Rustington documents are based on NALC templates. (Minute 40/22 for standing orders, Minute 41/22 for Financial Regulations.). Both documents are now over a year old and should be reviewed in the next 6 months and approved at a Full Council meeting.

The Council has a well ordered process for making payments to suppliers. Invoices are sent into the office, these are collated with purchase orders and goods received notes by the finance team. Invoices are checked by the RFO, then loaded on to Sage and coded to an appropriate nominal ledger code. Twice a month a payment batch report is prepared on Sage. This is sent to the Chairman / Vice Chairman and Clerk for approval to pay. Once the batch is approved, the payments are loaded on to the Council's bank account by the RFO, payments are then approved at bank by a second signatory (Clerk or councillor) . Payments are reported to Council meetings and this is minuted.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

I selected a sample of 10 transactions from the cashbook for the period April to September 2022. I was able to confirm for all transactions that:

- Transactions could be agreed back to invoice
- Clerk and councillor had certified the invoice as ready for payment
- Invoice included in a payment run document, payment set up at bank by RFO and authorised by Clerk or councillor, in line with financial regulation requirements
- VAT accounting correct
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council
- Where appropriate, goods received note in place to confirm goods were delivered to the Council.

I note that the Council has made changes to the payment process. A second signatory (Clerk or Councillor) authorises payments at bank after they have been set up by the RFO. Additional councillor signatories are also being set up to ensure adequate contingency arrangements are in place in case of absence.

I remind the Council to follow financial regulations closely when letting contracts for the Woodland Centre Project. This includes advertising all contracts over £25K on the Contract Finder website.

C: Risk Management & Insurance **Interim Audit**

I will review the risk assessment at my year end audit. I remind the Council to ensure that the risk assessment is discussed at a meeting of Full Council before 31 March and that this review is minuted.

The Council is insured with Hiscox, arranged by Gallaghers on a standard local government policy. I have seen the insurance policy; insurance was in date "continuous cover from 1.10.23 until the policy is cancelled". Fidelity insurance is set at £550,000. Whilst this may appear too low, given the cash and investment holdings at the Council, the Council has obtained guidance from the brokers confirming that this level of insurance is sufficient. This is because much of the Council's cash is held in difficult to access deposit accounts. This has been considered by the Council at the meeting in May 23. The risk was properly considered and the Council resolved not to increase insurance cover. I recommend that this is recorded in the risk register, together with the mitigating controls set out in Council minutes.

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Asset cover appeared consistent with the asset register. 6 buildings are insured, at an insurance value of £4.1m. Other significant areas of insurance coverage include:

- Street Furniture insured at £338K
- Playground Equipment insured at £184K

The Woodland Centre and Youth and Community Building were last revalued in 2019. It may be sensible to consider obtaining a professional valuation of these 2 buildings, as the insurer may significantly reduce payouts if a valuation less than 3 years old is not in place.

The Council has separate cyber insurance with OSR. This was in place at the time of my audit, with renewal due in November 23.

I confirmed that back up of data on the Sage system is taken around twice a week. This is stored in the Y drive on the Council network. The IT provider has confirmed in an email dated 1 November that this drive is included in the Council's data back-up routines, and that the back up has been tested and documented

I confirmed that the most recent internal audit report was properly considered by Councillors at the June meeting of Full Council and an appropriate minute recorded (minute 164/23).

D. Budget, Precept & Reserves

Interim Audit

The Council is in the process of preparing the budgets for 24-5. The RFO has shared the budget timetable with me. The draft budgets are being reviewed by committees at present. Precept and budget is due to be approved at Full Council in December. There is a backup meeting at the end of January 2023. All precepting authority deadlines should therefore be met.

I have confirmed that regular budget monitoring reports are issued to all councillors and to Finance and General Purpose Committee. I have reviewed files and confirmed that reports were issued for October, so I am satisfied budget monitoring is occurring regularly. I reviewed the report for the year to 17 October 2023. The report is comprehensive, giving analysis by nominal centre on a departmental basis. I reviewed the budget, there were no material overspends at this point. The RFO now produces a short narrative report to be added to the budget monitoring booklet to set out key messages and explain any significant variances.

I will review Council reserves at my year end audit.

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road, Farnham GU9 8BP

E: Income Interim Audit

The Council obtains income from a number of sources beyond the annual precept. These include:

- Room Hire and Functions - Woodland Centre / Youth Centre / Samuel Wickens Centre
- Sponsored flower beds
- Allotments
- Sports pitches

I confirmed fees and charges for 23-24 had been properly approved at meetings of the Council

- Sports Pitches – Leisure and Amenities November 2022
- Woodlands Centre - Leisure and Amenities November 2022

Invoices for hall bookings are generated from the Hallmaster system. This is a diary based a diary system, which is uploaded periodically into Sage – invoices are produced from this data. I tested a sample of credits recorded on the ledger for the first 6 months of the financial year. I tested

- sage entry to invoice raised
- checked invoice was raised at the correct rate, as approved by Council
- checked invoice to booking period as recorded on Hallmaster
- I also tested a payment from Rustington Social Club to lease records. The lease is currently being updated.

I was able to confirm correct invoicing for all transactions audited.

I reviewed the Council's debtors ledger. At the time of my audit debts outstanding were £3.2K. Debts appear well managed.

The Council has reduced the numbers of payments made by customers by cheque or cash – bank transfer is sought in the majority of cases.

F. Petty Cash

Petty cash is held at the office , museum and information centre. Books and receipts are brought into the office every month. I will review a petty cash count at my final audit.

G. Payroll

Payroll will be tested at the final audit

H. Assets and Investments

Year end audit

I: Bank Reconciliations

Interim Audit

Reconciliations for all bank accounts are carried out regularly and in accordance with regulations. This is clearly evidenced in the Council's bank reconciliation file. The July 2023 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following.

- The face of the bank statements had been signed off by the reviewing councillor, Councillor Warren
- All balances on the bank reconciliation were agreed back to bank statements / cashbooks
- Arithmetic checked for accuracy
- I confirmed that the bank reconciliations are reported to councillors in the monthly accounts for payment report.

The September bank reconciliation was being prepared at the time of my audit, ready for review by Councillor Warren.

The Council has an investment policy in place, as required for any council with cash and investment assets in excess of £100K. This has not been reviewed since 2020. The Policy should be reviewed annually, as set out in section 4 of the Investment Policy.

At the end of October 2023, the Council held £275K in a deposit bank account, which paid an interest rate of 1.35%. Consideration should be given to moving monies to accounts paying a better rate of interest, for example the Council holds a 35 day account paying 3%. Other options may be available in the market place.

Given changing rates of returns on bank and deposit accounts at present, it is recommended that the Council reviews its investment policy and deposit accounts annually to ensure that rates of return are maximised.

J. Year-end accounts

Year-end test

L: Exercise of Public Rights - Inspection of Accounts

External audit raised the following points in the 22-23 audit certificate

2 External auditor report 2022/23

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The inspection period for the exercise of electors' rights was set for 31 working days which is more than the mandatory 30 working days as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Paragraph 14(1). Although this is considered to be a minor technical breach, given more than the standard amount of time was provided for, in future the Council should ensure it provides the precise public inspection period. We would anticipate the Council taking this into account when it completes Assertion 4 on its 2023/4 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

It was noted on review that the announcement of the Notice of Public Rights was on the same day as the approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Regulation 12 – 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 set out the order required to be followed when approving, announcing, and publishing the Return and related documents in order to satisfy the Public Rights requirements. The Return must be approved prior to the Notice being published. To be able to demonstrate this, proper practice requires that the Notice is published no sooner than the day following the approval meeting and the Public Rights period commences no sooner than the next working day after that.

The Council should ensure it responds to these points in the 23-24 financial year . I cannot sign off that the Council has met the requirements of this control objective. The Council should also mark box 4 on the Annual Governance Statement as "NO".

L: : The Authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements

Year end test

N: Publication requirements 22-23 AGAR

The Council has published the Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the external audit certificate on the Council website. The Conclusion of Audit Certificate was published 26 September 2023 before the statutory deadline of 30 September. The external auditors issued their audit certificate on 30 August. The Council has met its obligations in this area. The Council was informed of the outcome of the audit at the meeting on 25 September 2023 (minute 232/23).

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

April Skies

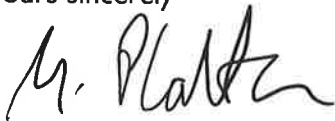
Accounting

0. Trusteeship

The Council disclosed that it was not a sole trustee for a trust fund in the 22-23 AGAR. The RFO confirms this is still the case.

I attach my invoice for your consideration. I will be in touch in February to make plans for the year end audit. Thanks for your help with the audit and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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Appendix A

Matters Arising 22-23 Interim Audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
I remind the Council to follow financial regulations closely when letting contracts for the Woodland Centre Project.	This includes advertising all contracts over £25K on the Contract Finder website.	
Woodlands Centre Project.	I remind the Council to ensure that VAT advice is sought before the project commences, to ensure most efficient VAT accounting arrangements are put in place. The RFO confirmed that this will be followed up with the Parkinson Partnership.	
Fidelity insurance is set at £550K. The risk was properly considered and the Council resolved not to increase insurance cover.	I recommend that this is recorded in the risk register, together with the mitigating controls set out in Council minutes.	
The Woodland Centre and Youth and Community Building were last revalued in 2019.	It may be sensible to consider obtaining a professional valuation of these 2 buildings, as the insurer may significantly reduce payouts if a valuation less than 3 years old is not in place	
At the end of October 2023, the Council held £275K in a deposit bank account, which paid an interest rate of 1.35%.	Consideration should be given to moving monies to accounts paying a better rate of interest, for example the Council holds a 35 day	

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	account paying 3%. Other options may be available in the market place	
The Council has an investment policy in place, as required for any council with cash and investment assets in excess of £100K. This has not been reviewed since 2020.	The Policy should be reviewed annually, as set out in section 4 of the Investment Policy.	
Exercise of Public Rights - Inspection of Accounts	. I cannot sign off that the Council has met the requirements of this control objective. The Council should also mark box 4 on the Annual Governance Statement as "NO".	

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

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Caroline Harris
Rustington Parish Council

2 August 2023

Dear Caroline

Internal Audit 2023-24 - Terms of Engagement

April Skies Accounting Ltd is able to supply Mike Platten to act as internal auditor to Rustington Parish Council. April Skies Accounting is able to carry out the internal audit for the Council for 23-24 financial year at a cost of £640 plus travel from Farnham in Surrey. This covers the cost of

- An interim audit, to be completed in November, December or January
- The year end audit, to be completed at the Council's convenience after 1 April and in time to permit the Council to approve the AGAR before 30 June.

For 23-24 April Skies Accounting will carry out an interim audit at all councils where we are engaged for internal audit services.

We are writing to confirm the terms of our appointment. This engagement letter sets out the basis on which we are engaged to act as internal auditors and our respective areas of responsibility.

I. Responsibilities of the Council

- I.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that it maintains an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. For clarity, responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the Council and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with the Council.
- I.2 The Council is also responsible for ensuring that accounting statements are prepared in accordance with the requirements of accounting regulations applicable to parish councils.
- I.3 The Council should make available to internal audit, as and when required, all accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings. We are entitled to obtain from the Council's members and employees any information or documentation we think necessary for the performance of our duties as internal auditors.
- I.4 We, as your internal auditors cannot absolve management of responsibility for internal controls and must ensure that we are not involved in the operation of controls or making management decisions as such activities may compromise our objectivity.

☎ 07958 990310
✉ mike@aprillskies.co.uk
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2. Responsibility of Internal Audit

2.1 It is our duty to complete and sign off section 4 of the Annual Return for Local Councils in England. We must report on the following assertions:

Table 1 – Internal Control Objectives

Source: *Annual Return for Local Councils in England*

A	Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year
B	The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
C	The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these
D	The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.
I	Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.
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, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.
K	Exemption from limited assurance review (smaller councils only)
L	Transparency Code (smaller councils compliance)
M	Inspection - Council met responsibilities to allow public inspection of the accounts
N	Publication requirements AGAR
O	Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

2.2 We will carry out any audit testing we deem necessary to complete section 4 of the Annual Return for Local Councils in England. Internal Audit has a responsibility to report any evidence of what we judge to be material non-compliance with any of the assertions set out in table 1 above via the annual report.

2.3 We will also report to you in writing any areas where we judge your systems of internal control may need to be strengthened, on completion of our audit work.

3. Scope of Audit

3.1 Our internal audit will be conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines, specifically those set out in section 4 of "Government and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners Guide."

3.2 The scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We will not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council in the course of the financial year.

3.3 In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements and management information.

4. Communication

4.1 We will contact you by email in order to confirm arrangements for the audit.

4.2 We will set out any matters arising from the audit in the following formats:

- by email, on conclusion of the audit, to enable discussion of recommendations
- a report will be issued by email, in time to enable you to complete the Annual Return

4.3 We will of course contact you regularly in the course of the financial year with regard to audit and other matters.

4.4 Our fees do not include attendance at meetings of the Council. If this is required, an additional charge will be incurred.

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5. Electronic Publication

- 5.1 Where audited financial information is published digitally by the Council, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that any such publication properly presents the financial information and auditor's report.
- 5.2 It is your responsibility to ensure there are controls in place to prevent or detect quickly any changes to electronically published information. The maintenance and integrity of electronically published information is the Council's responsibility and we accept no responsibility for changes made to audited information after it is first posted.

6. Limitation of liability

- 6.1 The work carried out under the terms of this engagement letter is solely for the use of Rustington Parish Council. We neither owe nor accept any duty of care to any other third party.

7. Competence

- 7.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd provides the services of Mike Platten to Rustington Parish Council in respect of the above assignment. Mike Platten is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). CIPFA maintains a professional disciplinary scheme under which complaints of misconduct by CIPFA members will be investigated. The client has a right to refer to CIPFA any matters affecting professional conduct or competence.

8. Continuity and Substitution

- 8.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd may, with the prior written approval of the Client, appoint a suitably qualified and skilled substitute to perform the services instead of the individual, provided that the substitute shall be required to enter into direct undertakings with the Client, including with regard to confidentiality. If the Client accepts the substitute, the Consultant Company shall continue to invoice the Client and shall be responsible for the remuneration of the substitute.

9. Insurance

- 9.1 April Skies Accounting Limited holds professional indemnity insurance cover to a limit of £250K. The professional indemnity insurer is Xbridge Limited, 6th Floor, 99 Gresham Street London EC2V 7NG

10. Independence

10.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd has no relationship with staff or Councillors of Rustington Parish Council, beyond that required to carry out a professional internal audit. Furthermore, in line with NALC guidance, April Skies Accounting Ltd will not take on any form of consultancy work with the Council.

11. Period of engagement

11.1 This letter is effective for accounting periods ending on or after 31-03-2024. Any matters arising in respect of prior periods will be dealt with in accordance with best practice.

12. Fees

12.1 We calculate our fees using a standard hourly rate plus expenses. Mileage will be charged at 45p mile. All other expenses will be charged at cost.

12.2 Invoices should be settled within 30 days of submission to the Council.

12.3 Our fee assumes a robust level of internal controls at the Council and documented procedures of a high standard. If additional work is required, this is charged at £65 per hour.

13. Agreement of terms

13.1 If, having considered the terms of this engagement letter, you conclude they are reasonable, and you wish to engage us on these terms, please let us have your written agreement to these arrangements by returning to us a signed copy of this engagement letter.

Yours faithfully



Mike Platten

April Skies Accounting Ltd

☎ 07958 990310

✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016

6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Rustington Parish Council agrees the appointment of April Skies Accounting Limited subject to the terms of this engagement letter

Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

April Skies Accounting

Control Objective	Category of Work	documents required
General	Minutes	Please ensure minutes are up to date on website before my audit, I read them in order to gain an understanding of what is happening at the Council
	Update	Please let me have a brief outline of any major issues at the Council I should be aware of (short paragraph by email). I am interested in major projects,PWLB applications, issues around finances etc
A Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year	check opening balance sheet	Opening balance sheet from accounting system or opening cashbook and bank statement (period 0 balance sheet if you use RBS Omega or Alpha)
	Proper report of audit reports to members	Minutes showing internal and external audit reports have been reported to members
	mid year balance sheet	Please let me have a copy of balance sheet at most recent month end if you are able to do this
	VAT	Most recent vat return and supporting financial reports
B The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Expenditure testing	Cashbook for full financial year to date I will select a sample of transactions - I will then need to see invoices / payment approval at council meeting / screen print of approval at bank / purchase order
	Tenders and quotes	For any expenditure items over £5k - detail of quotes obtained and approval to spend by Council
	Governance Documents	Details of meeting at which financial regs and standing orders were last updated What are monthly and transaction limits. Have these been approved by Council and do bank limits agree to approved limits. Where are cards stored and who reviews statements and evidences review
	Debit Credit Cards	Current insurance policy and details of review of assets to ensure proper insurance level
C The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	Insurance	Current insurance policy and details of review of assets to ensure proper insurance level
	IT back up	Confirm computer back up has been tested and documented
	Effectiveness of Internal Control - required by Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regs 2015	Does the Council carry out a review of the effectiveness of internal control annually? When was this last completed and reviewed at Council? (Pages 9 and 10 of the Practitioners' Guide are useful here)
	Risk assessment process	Risk assessment for 23-24 - I need to check arrangements are in place to get this approved at Full Council before 31 March. I am looking for active review of the risk assessment by the Council
D The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process;	23-24 Budget	Outline plans for budget and precept setting and key dates for approval of final budgets in Jan / feb

progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate	Budget v Actuals reporting in year	Q2 budget report for members plus budget v actual reports from finance system
E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for,	fees and charges	Evidence of reserves being considered in budget setting and monitoring
	Income transactions	Minutes of council meeting showing approval of fees and charges for 22-23
	Debtor Accounts	Cashbook for year to date - I will select a sample from this for verification
F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.		Details of any debts outstanding at date of audit - debtors ledger or similar supporting documentation for any grants / receipts above £500
G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	test staff paid correct rate of pay	Any petty cash - if so details of last count
H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	year end	August payroll - I want to see payroll summary for month so I can agree to ledger. I also want to see payslips for all staff. I will want to test gross pay per payslip back to approved rate of pay for the officer (usually annual pay award letter or part 2 minute of Council meeting) . I will also check staff sampled have a written contract August payroll - agree payments to HMRC and pension bodies back to payroll summary
I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	Bank reconciliation	Log into HRMC portal and confirm council is up to date with payments to HMRC Confirmation the Council is up to date with RTI submission to HMRC,
J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis	year end	Discuss process for asset register update in course of 23-24
L - compliance with transparency code for Councils under £25K and over £200K	website	Most recent bank reconciliation with evidence of review by Councillors . I want to see reconciliation, bank statements and evidence of review for all bank accounts Does the Council have an investment policy where cash holdings exceed £100K ? When was this last reviewed by Council and how is compliance with the policy monitored
M Inspection - Council met responsibilities to allow public inspection of the accounts	Inspection regulations followed	Receipts and payments only possible if income / expenditure below £200K
N - publication 2022 Agar	website reporting of audited 22-23AGAR	Small councils (under £25K) website reporting of AGAR and inspection rights . Large Councils (over £200K) Full Transparency Code compliance.
O Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	check statutory documents completed	Please send me the inspection of accounts notice for 22-23 accounts
		Conclusion of audit and accounts / governance statement and external audit certificate on website
		Confirm charity commission submissions up to date . Confirm separate charity accounting and meetings - only if applicable.

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the employer to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the workplace or its practices. Based on a recorded assessment the employer should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practicably possible. Making sure that all employees are made aware of the results of the risk assessment.

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:-

- Identify the areas to be reviewed
- Identify what the risk may be
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings
- Review, assess and revise if required.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk Overview	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of Precept in order for the Council to carry out its Statutory Duties Requirements not submitted to the District Council Amount not received by the District Council	L	The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the Precept requirement annually and makes recommendations to the Council at the January Meeting. The Council reviews the presented Budget update information, including actual position and projected position to year end and estimated figures for the next financial year. With this information the Council then agrees the amounts set for the specific Budget headings for the following year, the total of which is resolved to be the Precept amount to be requested from Arun District Council (ADC). This figure is submitted by the Clerk in a letter of request to ADC. The Clerk informs the Council when the monies are received (at the end of April and September). The money is recorded in the Monthly Report to Council, detailing all Income and Expenditure.	Existing procedures adequate. Review when necessary.

Financial Records	Inadequate Records Financial Irregularities	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. These Regulations are provided by the National Association of Local Councils and were most recently revised and adopted by the Council on 28 February 2022.	Existing procedures adequate. The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the Financial Regulations when necessary and make recommendations to Full Council. NALC is in the process of updating the Model Financial Regulations and upon receipt these will be placed before Full Council for consideration.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank Mistakes Loss Charges	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The RFO reconciles the bank accounts once a month. The RFO reviews the Councils banking arrangements regularly. Accounts are annually reviewed by internal and external audit.	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations and bank signatory list when necessary, especially after an Annual Meeting and an Election. Monitor the bank statements monthly.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. Cash received is banked on a regular basis. The Council's Insurance Policy has a Fidelity Guarantee.	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary. Ensure Fidelity Insurance is adequate.

Reporting and Auditing	Information Communication Compliance	L M	Monthly reconciliation prepared by RFO. A Budget monitoring statement is prepared monthly by the RFO and presented to Full Council. A full list of payments and receipts are provided at the Finance and General Purposes Meeting and the financial records (including a breakdown of the receipts and payments). The bank balances are presented each month and checked against the bank statement, by a Member of the Committee, on a quarterly basis. Council should regularly audit internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee. The Council undertakes an Annual Review of the Effectiveness of its Internal Audit Arrangements. There is a Bi-Annual Internal Audit the outcome of which is reported to Full Council.	Existing communication and auditing procedures adequate.
Direct Costs Overhead Expenses Debts	Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Unpaid invoices	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. The RFO prepares a schedule of payments requiring authorisation and presents the schedule together with the relevant invoices to the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, or two other Authorised Signatories, to review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied themselves shall authorise payment. The schedule forms part of the Agenda for the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting and the Committee retrospectively approves the payments.	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process for approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using S137 Powers of Expenditure.	Existing procedures adequate.

Grants - receivable	Receipt of Grants/Precept	L	The Parish Council receives the Precept from the District Council annually paid in two instalments. Receipt is reported to the Council at the next Full Council Meeting within the Financial Monthly Report. Any one off grants would come with their own terms and conditions to adhere to.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges - Rentals payable	Payments of leases/rentals	L	Samuel Wickens Centre - rent paid to Store Property on an annual basis. Woodland Park Sportsfield - rent paid quarterly to West Sussex County Council.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges - Rentals receivable	Receipt of rent	L	Room hire - Hirers pay in advance of date of booking. Sport's pitches - the RFO invoices Clubs for use of pitches as and when the pitches are used.	Existing procedures adequate. Review agreement and fees annually.
	Insurance implication	M	Clubs/Organisations are covered by their own insurance.	Ensure payments received.
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly	L	As per Financial Regulations normal Parish Council practice would be to seek, if possible, more than one quotation for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	Existing procedures adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.
	Overspend on services	M		

Salaries and associated costs	<p>Salary paid incorrectly</p> <p>Wrong hours paid</p> <p>Wrong rate paid</p> <p>False employee</p> <p>Wrong deductions of Tax</p> <p>Unpaid contributions to the Inland Revenue</p>	L	<p>The Parish Council authorises the recruitment of all employees at Council Meetings. The Clerk is also authorised to recruit employees and report back to Full Council asap. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council and applied on 1st April each year.</p> <p>Salary is paid by BACS each month (in 12 equal instalments) for a set number of hours and reported to the Council. Income tax is calculated using SAGE Payroll and paid monthly. All Personnel keep a record of hours worked which are checked by the Deputy Clerk and the RFO. All Personnel have a Contract of Employment and Job Description.</p>	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.
Employees	<p>Fraud by staff</p> <p>Health & Safety</p>	L L	<p>Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance adhered to with regards to fraud. All Employees to be given adequate training and safety equipment to be able to perform their roles. Health & Safety Policy reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Monitor Health & Safety requirements and insurance requirements annually.</p>
Clerk	<p>Loss of Clerk</p> <p>Health & Safety</p> <p>Fraud</p>	L L L	<p>The Clerk has a notice period in their Contract of Employment enabling time for recruitment.</p> <p>The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.</p> <p>The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Purchase reference books where necessary. Membership of CALC (County Association of Local Councils). Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance annually.</p> <p>Existing procedures adequate.</p>
Councillor Allowances	<p>Councillors over-paid</p> <p>Income Tax deduction</p>	L	<p>The Chairman has a budgeted annual allowance that is used as necessary for sundry items. Expenses are monitored to ensure the Budget is not exceeded and expenditure reported monthly to the Council. Allowances are paid to all elected Parish Councillors on a quarterly basis, using SAGE Payroll.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.

Election Costs	Risk of Election Cost	L/M	Risk is higher in an election year. When an election is due the Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from the District Council for a full election and an uncontested election. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having a contested election as this is a democratic process and should not be stifled.	Existing procedures adequate.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedures adequate.
Annual Return	Submit within time limits	L	The Council's Annual Return is completed and submitted online to HMRC within the prescribed time frame by the RFO. The Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit.	Existing procedures adequate.

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business Continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	<p>All files and recent records are kept on site at the Parish Council Offices, 34 Woodlands Avenue. All electronic files are backed up to the Council's Server on a daily basis. Paper copies of Meeting Minutes are kept in a fire proof safe on site. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed, the Deputy Clerk and Chairman to contact the CALC for advice.</p> <p>The Senior Management Team are able to work from home to facilitate the continuation of Council Services should the Offices be closed for an unexpected reason.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Review when necessary.</p> <p>Working from Home Policy in place</p>
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the Powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Council. Clerk to hold or complete training and achieve CiLCA qualification. Clerk clarifies position on any new proposal. Legal advice is sought via CALC where necessary.	Existing procedures adequate.
Minutes Agendas Notices Statutory Documents	<p>Accuracy and Legality - Non-compliance with statutory requirements</p> <p>Business Conduct</p> <p>Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes</p>	L L L	<p>Minutes and Agendas are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the Legal Requirements.</p> <p>Business conducted at all Council Meetings should be managed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Minutes are approved and signed at the next Committee or Council Meeting. Minutes and Agendas are displayed according to the legal requirements. Both are available to the public via the Parish Council website or from the Clerk.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Members to adhere to the Code of Conduct.</p>

Council Records - Paper	Loss through:- Theft Fire Damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the Woodlands Centre site. Records include current correspondence, minute books, bank statements, insurance etc. Recent materials are kept in metal filing cabinets (not fire proof) and older more historical records are stored in the loft of The Woodlands Centre building. Minute books and Leases/Deeds are kept within a fire proof safe on site as well as at the County Records Office.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is deemed adequate.
Council Records - Electronic	Loss through:- Theft Fire Damage Corruption of Computer Unauthorised Use	L	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on a Council Server. Back-ups of the files are made at regular intervals. All PC's are protected by anti-virus software. Access is restricted through use of controlled passwords. Updates to computers advised by IT Provider. Only approved software is used. The Parish Council ensures that only a reputable Broadband provider is used.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is deemed adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers and Employee Liability Insurance are a necessity and must be paid for. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place. Price comparisons are undertaken for Best Value.	Existing procedures adequate. Review of insurance provision annually. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance - This is set at £550K, less than traditionally prescribed amount e.g. 50% of the Precept plus reserves, but due to money being in tied accounts and hard to access, this was deemed acceptable by the Insurers (following consultation) as the £550k represented actual "at risk" funds. The option to increase the level of cover to £928,230.00 was considered by the Council at the meeting 15 May 23. The risk was properly discussed and considered and the Council resolved not to increase insurance cover -see Minute 142/23.

Data Protection	Policy Provision Breach of Confidentiality Breach of Data Protection Principles	L	The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). There is a formal procedure for dealing with Confidential Data. The Council has a published Privacy Notice. The Data Protection Policy was adopted on 23 July 2018. Staff have received training in Data Protection. Members and Personnel received GDPR refresher training in 2023.	Ensure annual renewal of Registration and compliance with GDPR.
Freedom of Information Act	Failure to comply with the Act	L	The Council has a Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils in place. The Council is able, if it chooses, to request a fee for any information supplied to cover the cost of consumables and Officer time.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Act.
Meeting Location	Adequacy Health & Safety including Lone Working	L	The Parish Council Meetings are held at the Council Offices in Woodlands Avenue. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspects. The Health & Safety Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.	Existing location adequate.

ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Community Buildings:- Woodlands Centre Samuel Wickens Centre Youth Centre	Loss or Damage/Vandalism Risk/Damage to third party(ies)/property including injury, trips, slips and falls Failure to obtain necessary Licences e.g. PRS Inadequate Budget Provision	L	An Asset Register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks are made of all equipment and buildings by Parish Council Personnel. Inspections/Testing include: -Annual PAT Testing -Annual Heating Installation Check -Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting System checked quarterly -First Aid Boxes checked and re-stocked weekly as required -Annual Fire Risk Assessment -Regular buildings check e.g. lighting, fire doors, emergency phone etc. -Weekly Fire Alarm testing. PRS Licence renewed Annually for all sites. Responsibility of Hirers is clearly defined in the Hall Hire Agreement. Anticipated costs are adequately provided for within the Budgetary process. All hire charges are reviewed annually.	Existing procedures adequate. Review insurance requirements annually.
Play Area and MUGA (Basketball Court) and Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Loss or Damage/Vandalism Risk/Damage to third party(ies) - personal injury Inadequate insurance cover Inadequate Maintenance Records	L/M L L L	An Asset Register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Daily Checks are made by Parish Council personnel. Any vandalism is recorded and reported to Sussex Police. Play Area is locked overnight. Monthly Play Area inspection completed by Local Authority. Annual Play Area Inspection completed by The Play Inspection Company. All reports are filed and any actions form part of a Works programme. Replacement of MUGA and Outdoor Fitness Equipment scheduled for 2024.	Existing procedure adequate. Maintain liaison with Police and ASB Team. Review insurance requirements annually.

Allotments	Inadequate insurance cover	L	Insurance requirements are reviewed annually.	Existing procedures adequate. The Allotments Committee meets three times per year.
	Vandalism	L/M	Sites are visited regularly and Parish Council personnel respond promptly to any complaints of vandalism.	
	Vermin	L	Tenancy Agreement outlines standards of cleanliness for the sites. Contract held with the District Council's preferred Contractor to carry out monthly vermin inspections of all sites. Complaints from plot holders dealt with promptly.	
	Inaccurate/out of date Allotment Register	L	Allotment Register maintained electronically and all amendments are promptly recorded. Agreements are completed and signed prior to occupation.	
	Untidy Plots	L	Plots are inspected on a monthly basis.	
	Failure to collect Rents	L	Proper records of income received and maintained are kept. Renewal procedure is established and in place.	
	Failure to review Rents	L	Rents are reviewed on an annual basis with costs confirmed one year in advance.	
	Unoccupied plots/loss of income	L	Waiting List is maintained. How to apply for an Allotment detailed on the Parish Council website as well as articles in the Parish Newsletter and on Facebook.	

Museum	Temperature, Humidity Controls and Museum Pests	L	Data Loggers in store room and main gallery - these are monitored regularly for humidity and temperature readings.	Review insurance requirements annually. Existing procedures adequate.
	Inadequate insurance cover	L	Insurance requirements are reviewed annually.	Review required for storage of Collection at The Woodlands Centre. NB new racking installed in 2023 and objects being rationalised for possible disposal. Archeology Collection being relocated to Fishbourne Roman Palace Stores - Fishbourne Roman Palace have £10M PLI and £5M ELI.
	Museum ineligible for external funding	L	Museum to maintain Accreditation status to improve eligibility for external funding.	
	Inadequately trained staff	L	Museum staff training reviewed annually via the Appraisal process. Specialist training sought through the Museum's Association and the Sussex Museum's Group.	
	Accidental damage to the Collection	L	Team trained in handling objects. Items on display are monitored by CCTV and checked regularly. Items stored safely within storage areas with adequate protection.	
	Natural Disasters - flooding, fire	L	Emergency Plan is in place and salvage kit kept on site.	
	Data Protection issues	L	All consent/loan forms are retained on file only for as long as is needed.	
Security of Collection	L	CCTV in galleries and a locking up procedure is in place. Adequate insurance in place.		
Noticeboards	Risk/Damage/Injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council has a variety of noticeboards placed across the Village which are listed on the Asset Register. All locations have approval by relevant parties and insurance cover. They are inspected regularly and any repairs/maintenance brought to the attention of the Clerk.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Roadside safety			

Public Seats	Risk/Damage/Injury to third parties Roadside safety	L	The Parish Council has a variety of public seats placed across the Village. All locations have approval by relevant parties and insurance cover. They are inspected regularly and any repairs/maintenance brought to the attention of the Clerk. Arrangements are in place to remove any dangerous street furniture.	Existing procedures adequate. Full audit of all public seats to be undertaken by Summer 2024.
Woodlands Recreation Ground and Woodland Park Sportsfield	Loss or Damage/Vandalism Risk/Damage to third party(ies) - personal injury Inadequate insurance cover Loss of Grounds Maintenance Contractor Inadequate maintenance of Parish Council owned machinery Lone Working	L L L L L	An Asset Register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Daily Checks are made by Parish Council personnel. Any vandalism is recorded and reported to Sussex Police. Grounds Maintenance is undertaken by an external contractor. Should the contractor be unable to fulfill their duties the Parish Council Leisure and Amenities Officer would undertake works in the interim. Parish Council machinery is routinely maintained. There is a named point of contact for any individual working alone. The individual must carry a mobile phone. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all those working alone are properly instructed, especially with First Aid training. Personal Protective Equipment supplied.	Existing procedures adequate.

Shelters	<p>Loss or Damage/Vandalism</p> <p>Risk/Damage to third party(ies) - personal injury</p> <p>Inadequate insurance cover</p> <p>Lone Working</p>	L	<p>The Parish Council has 15 Bus Shelters and one Beach Shelter within the Parish which are listed on the Asset Register. All locations have approval by relevant parties and insurance cover. They are inspected regularly and any repairs/maintenance brought to the attention of the Clerk. There is a named point of contact for any individual working alone. The individual must carry a mobile phone. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all those working alone are properly instructed, especially with First Aid training. Personal Protective Equipment supplied.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
Public Toilets	<p>Loss or Damage/Vandalism</p> <p>Risk/Damage to third party(ies) - personal injury</p> <p>Inadequate insurance cover</p> <p>Lone Working</p>	L/M	<p>The Parish Council holds responsibility for 4 Public Toilet facilities within the Parish which are all listed on the Asset Register. All have sufficient insurance cover. They are inspected regularly and any repairs/maintenance brought to the attention of the Clerk by the external contractor Biffa as part of the District Council's Cleansing Services Contract. They are locked overnight. There is a named point of contact for any individual working alone. The individual must carry a mobile phone. The Contractor, Biffa, is responsible for ensuring that all those working alone are properly instructed. Personal Protective Equipment supplied.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>New Toilet Cleansing Contract commenced from 1 April 2023.</p> <p>The Public Toilet Facility located at The Street will re-open as a Changing Places Unit in Spring 2024.</p>
Civic Regalia	Theft/Loss or Damage	L	Insurance is in place and reviewed annually.	Existing procedures adequate.

COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members Interests	Conflict of Interest	L	Declarations of Interest recorded at all Council Meetings.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Register of Members Interests	L	Register of Members' Interests forms reviewed annually. Councillors notify the Clerk of any changes throughout the year. Can be viewed on the Parish Council Website.	



RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 2 (3) OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

PART I - INTRODUCTION

This document has been compiled to provide information and guidance to all employees on this Council's Health and Safety Policy and organisational arrangements for implementation of that Policy. In addition, there may be Codes of Practice for certain working areas within the Council's control.

PART II - STATEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- 1.1 It is the policy of this Council to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, plant, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, volunteers and visitors, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose. The Council accepts its responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by its activities. Safety is of paramount importance to the Council and is taken seriously.
- 1.2 The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which the Council will make to implement the Policy are set out below.
- 1.3 The Policy will be kept up to date and reviewed on an annual basis.

PART III - THE ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Overall Responsibility

The Clerk of the Council, has overall and final responsibility for ensuring:-

- (a) the provision and implementation of the Health and Safety Policy
- (b) advising the Council on all matters relating to Health and Safety and Welfare
- (c) reporting areas which are unsatisfactory and/or require remedial action; and
- (d) its annual review.

2. Delegated Responsibilities within the Council

- 2.1 The Caretaker, Managers and Administrative Officers/Assistants, to whom the second line health and safety supervision within The Woodlands Centre, Youth Centre, Samuel Wickens Centre and Museum has been delegated, will be responsible to the Clerk of the Council for the day to day supervision within their defined area of responsibility and, in particular, for:-
 - (a) establishing, in consultation with the Clerk of the Council, safe systems of work and procedures for carrying out the Council's Health and Safety Policy incorporating any Regulations, approved Codes of Practice and other relevant Legislation

- (b) to ensure that safe working procedures and safe systems of work are implemented by staff in all of the Council's properties, and that a safe working environment is provided for them
 - (c) ensuring that any such staff under their control, receive adequate training, information and supervision to maintain safe standards
- 2.2 In addition, the Leisure and Amenities Officer will, as far as the Council's external facilities are concerned, be responsible for:-
- (a) maintaining safe working practices in order to achieve maximum safety
 - (b) ensuring adequate safety supervision and training where required, in particular, where young and inexperienced workers are concerned
 - (c) ensuring that all safety rules are observed and that protective clothing and equipment is worn or used where required
 - (d) ensuring that all machinery and equipment is properly maintained and safe to use and that guards are in position
 - (e) ensuring that all machinery and equipment is properly secured when not in use
- 2.3 All employees have the responsibility to co-operate with the object of achieving a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- 2.4 All Council employees are required to:-
- (a) make themselves familiar with and conform to the Council's Health and Safety Policy
 - (b) observe safety rules at all times
 - (c) where required, wear protective clothing and use appropriate safety devices provided
 - (d) report to their immediate Line Manager all accidents, injuries to persons and damage to vehicles, plant and equipment
 - (e) know the location of first aid facilities. Grounds/External Personnel are expected to carry a First Aid box in their vehicles at all times
 - (f) report all safety hazards as a matter of urgency to their immediate Line Manager
 - (g) know what to do in the case of fire or other emergency and the location of fire fighting equipment
 - (h) maintain good housekeeping at all times
 - (i) observe safe standards of behaviour and dress. Grounds/External Personnel are expected to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided
 - (j) not enter into any kind of horseplay or practical joking

- 2.5 It is the policy of this Council that all employees shall receive training in all safety aspects of their occupation, and courses shall be held for this purpose.
- 2.6 It shall be the duty of staff to carry out a visual safety inspection of plant and equipment prior to using such machinery.
- 2.7 It shall be the responsibility of all Parish Council Personnel to ensure that all accidents are comprehensively reported in writing to the Clerk of the Council who, in turn, will issue instructions to ensure that these do not continue and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee or the Leisure and Amenities Committee on accident prevention.
- 2.8 It shall be the responsibility of the Youth Centre, Museum and Samuel Wickens Centre Caretaker, the Leisure and Amenities Officer, the Council Office's Administrative Officers (The Woodlands Centre) and the Samuel Wickens Centre Administrative Assistants to monitor the maintenance of all plant and equipment.

PART IV - GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. First Aid

- 1.1 First Aid boxes are located at various locations in each of the Council's properties. The Council Office's Administrative Officers are responsible for carrying out periodical checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained in The Woodlands Centre and the Council Offices.
- 1.2 First Aid boxes are also located at the Leisure and Amenities Officer's Accommodation, Woodlands Centre Recreation Ground. A First Aid box is also provided on the Council's vehicles. The Leisure and Amenities Officer is responsible for carrying out periodic checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained.
- 1.3 First Aid boxes are also located in the kitchen and in the Norfolk Lounge at the Youth Centre. The Caretaker is responsible for carrying out periodical checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained.
- 1.4 First Aid boxes are also located in the Reception Area and in the Community Hall Kitchen at the Samuel Wickens Centre. The Centre's Administrative Assistants, in conjunction with the Caretaker, are responsible for carrying out periodical checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained.
- 1.5 A First Aid box is also located in the Museum Office. The Caretaker is responsible for carrying out periodical checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained.

2. Defibrillators

- 2.1 Defibrillators, affixed to external walls, are located as follows:-

- The Woodlands Centre
- The Samuel Wickens Centre
- Churchill Car Park Public Toilets (behind Iceland and The Factory Shop)
- The Quill (Woodlands Avenue)
- Southern end of Sea Avenue (affixed to a resident's garden wall)
- Beach Shelter (Junction of Sea Road/Sea Lane)

- Pavilion Terrace building (facing the sea) (Blind Veterans UK, Broadmark Lane/Beach)

Volunteer Community First Responders (Mrs Sally Holmes) carry out periodic checks to ensure the Defibrillators are in correct working order.

3. Accidents, Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences

- 3.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of the Council to ensure that all incidents are recorded in the Accident Book and to report those Injuries, Diseases and other Dangerous Occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive on the appropriate form.
- 3.2 Accident Books are located in the Council Offices, at the Samuel Wickens Centre and the Museum. Accident Books for Hirers' use are located in all Halls/Rooms at The Woodlands Centre, Youth Centre and in the Community Hall at the Samuel Wickens Centre. Any such instances should always be reported to the Clerk of the Council as soon as practicably possible.

FIRE SAFETY

4. Escape Route

- 4.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Council Office's Administrative Officers to ensure to the best of their ability, that the escape routes and passageways are kept clear in The Woodlands Centre.
- 4.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Caretaker to ensure to the best of their ability, that the escape routes and passage ways are kept clear in the Youth Centre.
- 4.3 It shall be the responsibility of the Museum Manager and Administrative Assistant to ensure to the best of their ability, that the escape routes and passage ways are kept clear in the Museum.
- 4.4 It shall be the responsibility of the Caretaker and the Samuel Wickens Centre Administrative Assistants to assure to the best of their ability, that the escape routes and passageways are kept clear in the Samuel Wickens Centre.

5. Fire Extinguishers, Fire Alarm System and Emergency Lighting

- 5.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of the Council to organise annual inspections of all fire extinguishers on the Council's premises.
- 5.2 The maintenance Companies responsible for carrying out these inspections are:-

Fire Extinguishers	-	D-Tect Fire & Security
Fire Alarm System	-	D-Tect Fire & Security
Emergency Lighting	-	D-Tect Fire & Security

6. Advice and Consultancy

The local Inspector's Office is located at:-
Health and Safety Executive
The Council Offices, Station Road East
Oxted, Surrey RH8 0BT

The Incident Contact Centre's telephone number is:-
0345 300 9923 (Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5.00 pm)

The HSE may need to respond out of hours:-

- following a work-related death;
- following a serious incident where there have been multiple casualties;
- following an incident which has caused major disruption such as evacuation of people, closure of roads, large numbers of people going to hospital etc.

For any such incidents, the Duty Officer's contact number is:-
0151 922 9235 (5.00 pm to 8.30 am)

The Health & Safety Executive's Website is - www.hse.gov.uk

7. Training

- 7.1 It shall be the duty of the Clerk of the Council to issue all newly appointed staff with a personal copy of the Rustington Parish Council's Health and Safety Policy and such supplements as are applicable to their duties and responsibilities.
- 7.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of the Council to ensure that all new manual staff receive adequate training in all safety aspects of their occupation and, in particular, the use of strimmers, mowers, hedge cutters and other dangerous machinery.

8. Contractors and Visitors

- 8.1 Where contractors and sub-contractors are engaged by the Parish Council, they must maintain effective control of themselves and those working under them so as to ensure that they comply with their responsibilities and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Etc., Act 1974.
- 8.2 The Parish Council shall ensure that those not in employment of the Council, including the general public, are not exposed to risk to their safety or health when on the Council's premises.

C A WARD
Clerk of the Council
(Reviewed March 2024)



RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Act

Publication Scheme

(Adopted 24 November 2008)

Reviewed 25 March 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 grants to members of the public rights of access to all kinds of recorded information held by a wide range of public authorities. Information about the Act is available from the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk.

Publication Scheme

Under the Act every Public Authority is required to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. This Scheme provides the public with a structured listing of any information released and a commitment to make it available to all. The Scheme sets out how the Council intends to publish the different Classes of information it makes available and whether it needs to charge for providing the information.

Freedom of Information Requests and the Publication Scheme

It is important to note that a publication Scheme simply sets out the information that is routinely available. Information that is not listed in the Information Available Guide of this document can still be requested and it will be made available unless it can be legitimately withheld. This can be done by making a written request to the Parish Clerk who will reply within 20 working days after receipt of the request.

The Council's Commitment to the Act

The Council is committed to openness and accountability and already makes large amounts of information available to the public, through the website, via the telephone and by post. Should a personal visit be required to view information, an appointment will be necessary.

MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

This model publication Scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication Scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The Scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this Scheme
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this Scheme
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available
- To make this publication Scheme available to the public
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term “dataset” is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term “relevant copyright work” is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure
- Information in draft form
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this Scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this Scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this Scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this Scheme

The purpose of this Scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

Charges may also be made for information provided under this Scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this Scheme can be requested in writing (an email request is sufficient), when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Please note that should information requested and the cost of complying with a request that exceeds £450 (this is calculated on the basis of 18 hours work at £25 per hour) the Council is entitled to make a charge known as 'prescribed costs' which include the costs of locating the information, retrieving the information, extracting the information from a document containing it, informing you whether we hold the information and communicating the information to you prior to complying with your request. Alternatively, the Council may refuse the request.

You will be informed as early on in the process in writing if the request is likely to exceed £450 so that you have the option to adjust your request to bring it under the £450 limit. Where the cost of complying with the request does not exceed £450 the Council may only charge for disbursements which include photo-copying, printing, postage etc. You will be informed as early on in the process as possible if a charge is payable. Any charges must be paid prior to the information being sent. The requestor will have 60 days to pay the fees, failing which the request will be closed.

Information available from Rustington Parish Council under the Model Publication Scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class1 – Who we are and what we do <i>(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</i> <i>(Current information only)</i>		
About Rustington and The Parish Council	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Membership List of Councillors	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards Community Buildings Notice Boards	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free Free
List of Committees	Website	Free
Contact Details for Parish Clerk and Council Members	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free
Location of main Council Office, Village Information Centre, Buildings and Land in ownership of the Parish Council and accessibility details	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Staffing Structure	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Staff Vacancies and Employment Opportunities	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards Community Buildings Notice Boards	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free Free
Parish Newsletter (issued quarterly)	Website Hard Copy (distributed to parishioners homes)	Free Free
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it <i>(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</i> <i>(Current and previous financial year as a minimum)</i>		
Annual Return Form and Report by Auditor	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards Community Buildings Notice Boards	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free Free
Internal Auditor Reports to Council (twice yearly)	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Finalised Budget	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Precept	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy

Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Grants given and received	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
List of current Contracts awarded and value of Contract	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Members' Allowances and Expenses	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Community Hall Hire Charges	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing <i>(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)</i>		
Community Action Plan	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Annual Report to Parish Meeting <i>(Current and previous year as a minimum)</i>	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Class 4 – How we make decisions <i>(Decision making processes and records of decisions)</i> <i>(Current and previous Council year as a minimum)</i>		
Timetable of Meetings (Council, any Committee/Sub-Committee Meetings and Parish Meetings)	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards Community Buildings Notice Board	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free Free
Agendas of Meetings (as above)	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Notice Boards	Free £0.05 A4 copy Free
Minutes of Meetings (as above) <i>(This will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the Meeting)</i>	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Reports presented to Council Meetings – <i>(This will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the Meeting)</i>	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Responses to Consultation Papers	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Responses to Planning Applications	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures <i>(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) (Current information only)</i>		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business, the provision of services and the employment of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Code of Members' Conduct • *Council's Standing Orders • *Financial Regulations • Staff Grievance Procedures • *Freedom of Information Act Policy & Publication Scheme • *Equal Opportunities Policy 		Hard copies of all the documents listed are available at £0.05 per A4 copy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy ● *Health & Safety Policy ● Staff Application Form ● Hall Hire Agreement ● *Schedule of Charges (for the publication of information) ● Risk Assessment - Land, Buildings etc. ● Playgrounds Inspection Reports ● *Complaints Procedure Policy ● Homeworking Policy ● Investment Policy ● Sickness & Absence Management Policy ● LGPS Employer Discretions Policy ● Redeployment and Redundancy Policy ● Safeguarding Policy ● Social Media Policy ● *Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement ● Document Retention and Disposal Policy ● Use of CCTV Policy ● Website Policy & Guidance ● IT Communications & Monitoring Policy ● *Data Protection Policy ● Information Security Policy ● *Guidance and Terms and Conditions of Use for Casual and Organised Activities at the Woodlands Recreation Ground 		<p>NB *All items marked with an asterisk are also available, to be viewed, via the Parish Council website free of charge</p>
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Class 6 – Lists and Registers

(Currently maintained lists and registers)

Asset Register	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Register of Members' Interests	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk Website	£0.05 A4 copy Free
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Allotments Register	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Contractors Listings	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Suppliers Listings	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy

Class 7 – The services we offer

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)

(Current information only)

Allotments	Website	Free
	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy
Community Centres	Website	Free
Parks, Playing Fields and Recreational Facilities	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Seating, Litter Bins, Clocks, Memorials and Lighting	Website Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	Free £0.05 A4 copy
Bus Shelters	Website	Free
	Hard Copy - Parish Clerk	£0.05 A4 copy

Contact details:-

Mrs Carole Ward
Clerk of the Council, Council Offices,
34 Woodlands Avenue, Rustington, West Sussex BN16 3HB
Tel: 01903 786420
Email: caroleward@rustingtonpc.org
Website: www.rustingtonpc.org

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying A4 Black and White £0.05 per sheet	Actual cost * £0.0038
	Postage £0.85	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class = 01/04/24 £0.85 2 nd class
Publications	£1.50 per copy per pre published document	£1.00 per copy

** Actual Cost incurred by Rustington Parish Council*



Rustington Parish Council

HOMWORKING POLICY

1. Policy
2. Scope of this policy
3. Safe working environment
4. Facilities and equipment
5. Hours of work
6. Potential conflicts of interest
7. Data protection
8. Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

1. Policy

The Council recognises the advantages of home-based working although it doesn't suit everyone, and some job roles may not be appropriate to undertake at home. There may also be times, such as a Pandemic, when home-based working is the only option available in order to keep the Council functioning.

This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that will apply if you work from home.

2. Scope of this policy

It applies to all staff who are home-based on occasion whether full time, part time or fixed term.

3. Safe working environment

Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that you work in a safe manner and that you follow all health and safety instructions issued by the Council.

You must complete and submit a workstation risk assessment and ensure that this remains up-to-date. If you have any questions about the risk assessment, or if you identify any potential risks when carrying out the assessment, you should refer these to the Clerk in the first instance.

Some of the most important considerations include:-

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work from home without distractions
- Your home office should have adequate space for you to work safely and comfortably
- Your desk should be large enough to accommodate your equipment and paperwork
- You should have sufficient storage and your workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand
- Your work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
- You must also ensure that you visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you regularly and report any defects.

We reserve the right to visit you at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

4. Facilities and equipment

The Council will provide you with the following equipment for you to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary.

- Laptop computer

It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided to you and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should a risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, please discuss this with the Clerk.

All equipment provided by the Council is for you to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by you or your family.

All equipment will belong to the Council and you will be required to return it promptly should you leave the Council's employment. If the Council is unable to make suitable arrangements, it may collect the equipment and any documents before your last day.

5. Hours of work

As a home-based worker, your Contract of Employment will specify the hours when we expect you to be at work and contactable by telephone or email. There may be times during the working day when you are not available in which case these should be flagged to the Clerk (or the Chair of the Council) with prior authorisation.

You must be mindful to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:

- A break of at least 20 minutes during each working day over 6 hours,
- A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
- At least one complete day each week when no work is done.

6. Potential conflicts of interest

During your hours of work, the Council expects that your work environment enables you to work effectively and that you are not distracted by domestic matters. It is not appropriate to combine homeworking with caring for a dependant.

If there is an emergency and you need to attend to a non-work matter, then you should notify the Clerk.

7. Data protection

As a home-based worker you are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the council secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- Keep all documentation belonging to the Council in a secure place at all times except when in use,
- Set up and use a unique password for the laptop computer, and,
- Ensure that documents are saved to the server rather than the laptop computer's hard drive.

Furthermore, the laptop computer and other equipment provided by us must be used only for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose.

If you have a telephone conversation where you are discussing confidential work matters, you should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

8. Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

Whilst our Employer's Liability Insurance extends to home based staff, and any Council equipment installed in your home will also be covered, you should ensure that any agreement with your landlord or mortgage lender allows you to work from home, and that your Home Buildings and Contents Insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Date of Policy: 16 March 2020

Approved by Full Council: 23 March 2020

Policy effective from: 24 March 2020

Reviewed: 22 March 2021

28 March 2022

27 March 2023

25 March 2024



Rustington Parish Council

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Rustington Parish Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all aspects of its work. The Parish Council aims to provide services and activities which are accessible to as many people as possible whilst recognising the diversity of local need.

The Parish Council will work to tackle direct and indirect discrimination, to promote social inclusion and to actively encourage greater participation of underrepresented groups. This also includes fostering good relationships between different individuals and groups within the Parish.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Rustington Parish Council complies with current legislation and with its own commitment to promote diversity and equality and to tackle discrimination in all its activities and services.

Scope

This Policy applies to Council decision-making, services and activities (including participation in the democratic processes) community consultation and engagement, procurement and employment. (This list is not exhaustive).

Legal Position

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Through the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Act also requires public bodies including parish councils to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Policy

1) Rustington Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Council is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities in the workplace and in the delivery of services and all other activities undertaken by the Council.

2) Rustington Parish Council will publish and promote its Equality and Diversity Policy so that all councillors, employees, contractors, service users and members of the public are aware of its commitment to equality.

3) Rustington Parish Council will strive for equality of access to all its services and activities and will consider the Equality and Diversity Policy when commissioning, designing, delivering or evaluating services.

4) Rustington Parish Council will challenge any discrimination it recognises within the Parish Council and the wider community. It is the responsibility of each individual member of the Council and the Parish Clerk to challenge discrimination when it is encountered.

5) Rustington Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal, or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the Council and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief. Full details are contained within the Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.

6) Rustington Parish Council will apply equality principles to work undertaken for the Council by external contractors or with partners. Decisions to make grant funding and/or to support other organisations and events or work in partnership with any third party will be informed by the Equality and Diversity policy and practice of the organisations concerned.

7) Rustington Parish Council will acknowledge and, where possible, celebrate the diversity within the Parish and will support the development of communities and assist them in challenging discrimination.

8) Rustington Parish Council will raise awareness and build capacity within the Council about the equality considerations by including equality and diversity training in its training plans for personnel and Councillors.

Date Adopted: 25 March 2024

Date of Next Review: March 2025