

## RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES:** of the Monthly Meeting held on 23 March 2026

**PRESENT:** Councillors Cooper (Chairman), Mrs C Broomfield, M Broomfield, J Ceiriog-Hughes, Mrs A Cooper, Mrs P Gregory, G Lee, Mrs S Partridge, Ms M Revell and D Rogers

**In attendance:** Mrs C Ward (Clerk of the Council) and Ms R Costan (Deputy Clerk of the Council)

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### **55/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett (Personal), Grevett (Personal), Ms Lloyd (Personal), Mrs Stevens (Personal) and Warren (Indisposition). These apologies were accepted by the Council.

### **56/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Broomfield declared a personal interest in Minute 64/26 (Minute 25/26 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2026 refers). She remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Broomfield declared a personal interest in Minute 64/26 (Minute 25/26 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2026 refers). He remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute 64/26 (Minute 25/26 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2026 refers). He remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

### **57/26 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2026 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **58/26 SUSSEX POLICE**

An apology for absence had been received from PCSO Raju.

#### **(a) Matters Arising**

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by the Community Safety Manager at the Arun District Council, regarding the recent rise in youth related anti-social behaviour incidents in Rustington. He had advised that the Anti-Social Behaviour Team at the District Council had been looking at types of incidents, locations, and agreeing ways forward in terms of interventions, and partnership working.

She said that his reason for contacting her was to see whether representatives from the Council would like to meet with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to receive an update on the steps being taken, and to explore ways in which everyone involved could address this issue. She said that the Meeting would be taking place on 24 March 2026, and she would report back to the Council in this regard at its next Meeting.

Councillor Lee then advised that the figures so far in the current month (1-18 March) numbered 57, which included 19 thefts, 13 anti-social behaviour incidents, 7 criminal damage incidents and 1 business theft. He then referred to a break-in at Tesco Express where one of the culprits had been identified and would be being arrested whenever they came to notice.

**59/26**      **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

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

Councillor Mrs Cooper advised that the next Meeting of the Council would be being held on 25 March 2026, but that there was nothing further of any significance to report at the present time.

The Council NOTED the above information.

**60/26**      **COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Mrs Cooper, in her capacity as a County Councillor, reported on County Council matters as follows:-

- *Last Meeting of current Council on 27 March 2026*
- *Containers and debris from the Baltic Klipper - Clean up costs - Still negotiating who should be bearing the cost.*

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, expressed thanks and appreciation to Councillor Mrs Cooper for her hard work and efforts for the benefit of the community of Rustington, and her unceasing support of the Council, throughout her term of office.

**61/26**      **CLERK'S REPORT**

**(a)**      **Grant Aid - Men Walk Talk**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from Men Walk Talk, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the Grant Aid of £300.00 awarded towards promotional and advertising materials.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**(b)**      **Grant Aid - St Peter and St Paul Pantry - Georgian Gardens School Outreach Provision**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from St Peter and St Paul Pantry, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the Grant Aid of £400.00 awarded towards the top up of the School Pantry for a period of three months.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**(c)**      **Grant Aid - Littlehampton Community Fridge**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the Littlehampton Community Fridge, expressing its thanks and appreciation in respect of the Grant Aid of £300.00 awarded towards promotional materials, collecting boxes and an A-Board.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**62/26**      **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman said that he had nothing to report at the present time.

**63/26**            **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Council NOTED the Report of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 23 February 2026.

*(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillors Mrs Broomfield, Broomfield and Rogers had declared a personal interest in their capacity as Trustees of the Littlehampton District Lions Club - Minute 25/26 refers)*

**64/26**            **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2026. (Verbal Report from the Chairman of the Committee).

The Council RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2026 be APPROVED.

**65/26**            **ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2026.

The Council RESOLVED that the Report of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2026 be APPROVED.

**66/26**            **LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Leisure and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2026.

The Council RESOLVED that the Report of the Leisure and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2026 be APPROVED.

**67/26**            **VACANCY - WEST WARD - CO-OPTION PROCEDURE**

The Clerk referred to Minute 38/26 and said that as there had not been a call for an Election in respect of the current vacancy in the West Ward, it had now been advertised for filling by the co-option process.

She advised that the closing date for the receipt of applications was 7 April 2026, and to date, no applications had been received, although one individual had expressed an interest but had not yet applied.

She reminded Members that it would be necessary to invite any applicants to make a brief personal presentation to the Council at its next Meeting on Monday 27 April 2026, at a point prior to it considering the applications received. She said that the written applications would be circulated with the Agenda papers for the Meeting.

She then said that she had circulated the Co-Option Procedure, which included full details of the process to be followed at the Meeting for Members' information.

The Council NOTED this information.

**68/26**            **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS**

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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.

**69/26**            **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Council considered and reviewed its Financial Regulations as presented and RESOLVED to APPROVE the amendments highlighted in the document.

A copy of the Financial Regulations are attached and form a part of these Minutes.

**70/26**            **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Clerk reminded Members that the new Code of Conduct, as re-drafted and adopted by the District Council, had been adopted at the Full Council Meeting held on 26 April 2021.

She said that the Council's External Auditor's, Moore East Midlands, had, when returning the signed Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025, stated:-

'You have provided that the Council has not reviewed the Code of Conduct since April 2021. We understand this is in line with your adopted Code of Conduct which states that the LGA is committed to reviewing it annually and advising the Council. We would therefore anticipate seeing a Minute recording that no updates have been received by the Council on an annual basis'

She then confirmed that no updates had been received from the Local Government Authority in respect of any amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Council NOTED this information and AGREED that the current Members' Code of Conduct did not need to be amended in any way.

**71/26**            **2026/2027 BUDGET**

The Council NOTED the receipt of the Council's approved Budget for 2026/2027, copies of which had been previously circulated to all Members.

**72/26**            **INVESTMENT POLICY**

The Council reviewed its Investment 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.

The Council NOTED this information.

**73/26**            **ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Council considered and 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.

**74/26**            **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

The Council considered and 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.

**75/26**            **COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Chairman advised that the following Policies had been reviewed, with either no changes or only very minor amendments being required to reflect paragraph references, changes to key contact details, email addresses or website links:-

- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

The Council RESOLVED unanimously to take no action in respect of any further amendments to the Policies at the present time.

**76/26            THE WOODLANDS CENTRE - MAJOR REDESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

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The Council NOTED the Summary Notes of the Design Workshop held on 12 February 2026.

The Clerk then said that the Finance Manager, Deputy Clerk and herself were due to meet with the Project Managers and the Quantity Surveyor on 24 March 2026 to discuss the Tender Process with a view to programming it out.

She then advised that the Electrical Engineers had visited The Woodlands Centre to carry out a further more extensive survey, and some soil testing and ground investigations were due to be carried out on 8 April 2026, in the area of the new chair store extension.

The Council NOTED this information.

**77/26            RUSTINGTON YOUTH CENTRE**

The Clerk referred to Minute 41/26 and reminded the Council that the ‘Come and Try Table Tennis’ Afternoon would be taking place on 28 March 2026, with the weekly Youth Table Tennis Club commencing at the beginning of the Summer Term.

In the absence of Councillor Mrs Stevens, the Clerk reminded Members that the progress being made by the Joint Parishes Youth Service Review Group had been reported to the Leisure and Amenities Committee at its Meeting on 2 March 2026 (Minute 7/26(b) refers). She said that this item would, in the future, continue to be reported to that Committee, with this item now being removed from the Council Agenda.

The Council NOTED this information.

**78/26            RUSTINGTON IN-BLOOM**

Councillor Lee reported that, since the last Meeting, four hanging baskets had been installed in front of the shops at Worthing Road. He also advised that two hedgehog houses and two bird boxes had been given to the three Primary Schools and the Committee still had plans to build and install planters for five locations around the Village.

He then said that the Committee had been awarded a grant of £1,500.00 by the Arun District Council Safer Arun Partnership, which would be being spent on planters, planting and wildlife habitat.

He also reported that the Committee had had a table at the Charities Monthly Market at the Methodist Church on 7 March 2026.

He concluded by advising that the Annual General Meeting would be being held on 22 April 2026.

Councillor Rogers referred to the daffodils that had been planted by the Committee earlier in the year were now in full bloom around the Village.

Councillor Mrs Partridge then said that members of the Committee had carried out a litter pick in the centre of the Village on 14 March 2026.

The Council NOTED this information.

**79/26            FUTURE OF ZACHARY MERTON HOSPITAL AND LAND**

The Clerk referred to Minute 45/26 and said that she had previously circulated letters from Alison Griffiths MP to the Chairman of the Council and to The Secretary of State for Health and Care.

She said that she had subsequently circulated a response received from the Minister of State for Health, Karin Smyth, MP.

Following a detailed discussion, the Council AGREED that a response should be made advising that the specific concerns raised in the Council's letter had not been addressed and requesting a more direct response to all of the points therein.

She then said that she had also circulated a letter in respect of an Invitation to the Chief Executive of Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust to attend the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting on 9 April 2026, together with a response from the Associate Director of Communications and Engagement.

She said that, unfortunately, the Invitation had been declined on the grounds that as the date of the Assembly was likely to fall within the local pre-election period, with West Sussex elections expected in May, no representatives would be able to attend the Meeting, as this reflected the requirements placed on NHS organisations during this period.

The response also confirmed that no further decisions would be taken regarding Zachary Merton Hospital until after the May Elections. Reference was also made to the fact that several related points had recently been raised with the Trust by Alison Griffiths MP, which were being worked through, and the outcomes would be able to be shared with the Council and the community more widely, once finalised, which it was hoped would provide some interim assurance. It was also stated that "it might be helpful after this point to have a planning discussion between you, myself and my colleague Laura at NHS Sussex to consider how we provide further assurance to your Council."

The Council NOTED this information.

She also reported that she had circulated a copy of a letter from Alison Griffiths MP to Ms Siobhan Melia, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust.

She said that Mrs Griffiths, MP, was inviting Ms Melia to join her and the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Andy Cooper, at a Public Meeting at The Woodlands Centre on 1 April 2026 from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm. In her letter Mrs Griffiths stated that she recognised the date of the Meeting was within the Local Authority Pre-Election Period, but the Meeting did not fall within the scope of activities restricted by purdah, as the event was not political campaigning or the promotion of new policy. Instead, it was a forum for public accountability and community engagement concerning an ongoing NHS service change.

The Chairman then reported that a response had subsequently been received from Mrs Griffiths' Office advising that she had received a similar response from the Community Trust asserting that they could not attend a Meeting in April due to the pre-election period. He said that Mrs Griffiths was disappointed with this response but felt she had no option but to accept this decision.

He then advised that the Trust had assured her that no further decisions about the site would be taken during the pre-election or election period, and Mrs Griffiths had asked for this agreement to be extended until a Public Meeting has taken place.

The Chairman concluded by advising that Mrs Griffiths had also secured an alternative date on which Ms Melia had agreed to address residents at a Public Meeting, namely the evening of Thursday 21 May 2026, and she could confirm that the Village Memorial Hall would be used to host the Meeting.

He said that the Meeting would be being held in the Village Memorial Hall, advising that the regular hirer had kindly agreed to their hiring being cancelled. He said that further discussions would now be taking place with Mrs Griffiths and/or her personnel regarding the arrangements for the Public Meeting, including publicity, etc., and Members would be kept fully informed via email and a report back at the next Meeting.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then reported that the West Sussex County Council Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee had delegated responsibility regarding the future of the Zachary Merton Hospital and Land to a Group to deal with the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust. Unfortunately, the Trust had not been able to attend any Meetings with the Group prior to the County Council Elections in May 2026. She said that the Group had written to the Trust to request assurance that no decisions in respect of the future of the building and site would be made until after the Elections when a new Group had been appointed and a Meeting could be arranged.

The Council NOTED this information.

#### **80/26            LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - POSSIBLE AFFECTS ON PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

The Chairman said that Councillors Bennett, Mrs Cooper, Rogers, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and himself had met online with Lee Dunkley, the County Executive Officer of the Cornwall Association of Local Councils, to talk about the effect that Local Government Re-organisation had had on Parish and Town Councils in Cornwall, a County that had gone through this process a few years before.

He said that some of the points made by Mr Dunkley were as follows:-

- Change is coming - Embrace it and make the most of it
- An attitude change would be needed from all involved
- Town and Parish Councils would become the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier of Local Government
- More responsibility, more spending power, more scrutiny
- Annual Parish Precepts will rise - Highest now in Cornwall £400.00 per annum
- As far as District and County Council Assets/Facilities/Services within the Parish boundary are concerned - Carry out a full audit - Make a list of what Assets/Services the Parish Council might want.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED that the appointed Working Party should meet at an appropriate time in the future to consider what Assets/Facilities/Services the Council might like to take over and make recommendations to the Council in due course.

#### **81/26            CHURCHES TOGETHER IN RUSTINGTON AND EAST PRESTON**

The Council NOTED a letter received from the Secretary, Churches Together in Rustington and East Preston, of the Church Council's intention to hold a procession and service on Good Friday 3 April 2026, as in previous years.

#### **82/26            REQUEST FOR A ZEBRA CROSSING - THE STREET**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated email correspondence in this regard.

She advised that following a review of the information available to the County Council, and considering current priorities and funding constraints, it would not be progressing a zebra crossing on The Street at the present time, nor commissioning a formal ADPV2 assessment as requested by Drs Christopher Wild and Heather Wild.

The Council was extremely disappointed to NOTE this information, particularly considering the number of highway issues in this vicinity, namely speeding vehicles, etc.

**83/26            ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - ARUN FLOOD FORUM MEETING - 13 APRIL 2026**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from Joe Russell-Wells, Group Head of Environment and Climate Change, advising that the District Council was hosting the next Arun Flood Forum Meeting on 13 April 2026 from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

The Council NOTED this information.

**84/26            WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - UPDATES IN PLANNING TRAINING SESSION - 26 FEBRUARY 2026**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated a Summary of the Training Session produced by Councillor Warren as follows:-

*The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation now in progress with final product expected middle of the year. Draft unlikely to be altered much and in use from that date. Contains numbered policies for decision making and will supersede local policies with no variants allowed. Will contain higher housing targets, sometimes doubled. Gypsy and traveller sites are incorporated as is design guidance which is consolidated into a single guide that sets principles and desirable outcomes.*

*It is expected there will be fewer local plans but be achieved within thirty months as against current average of seven years. Will contain the same stages and will require a five-year review. Must stick to site allocations only. Arun only one in Sussex not being worked on or completed. If local plan not available then speculative development will occur and be allowed.*

*Local plans must continue to contain a five-year land supply to hold weight. Although Arun states six thousand house approvals given but not started (and therefore not in land supply) NPPF will not penalise builders. For major sites though (over fifty properties) developer must state a start date and build-out expectancy. New site thresholds: 1-9 properties is minor, 10-49 medium and above that major. Government hopes more small builders are attracted (probably reducing affordable commitment) although current progress is backward with a collapse in London building and others, like John Lewis, going out of the business.*

*Currently there is a major gulf between government requirements and district plans. This to be filled at Mayor level producing 'spatial' development plans including the necessary infrastructure. At a local level a smaller number of applications to go to committee (new committee size must be less than twelve) with the committee decision made only by people who have undergone mandatory training and achieving a certificate. i.e. enhancing experience and quality. Doesn't apply to parishes. Neighbourhood plans to only contain smaller sites and local issues. No government funding to be available.*

*As a Parish Council you will need to be familiar with latest NPPF as plans at this and local level must be consistent with government policy.*

*With regard to plans tilted balance will not occur and there to be a presumption in favour of sustainable development built in. A developer to pay in to a Nature Restoration Fund instead of producing their own solution and Natural England will use this funding to apply biodiversity and habitat restoration but generally at a higher level than site by site.*

*From April this year all appeals will use the original written representations with no additional information permitted. No comment allowed on inspectorate decision.*

*Government expects a doubling of solar power through properties, businesses and ground cover by 2050.*

She said she had also circulated the slides used by Steve Tilburty (Planning Consultant) at the Training Session.

The Council NOTED this information and expressed its thanks and appreciation to Councillor Warren for his time and effort in this connection.

**85/26            WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - WSALC CLERKS NETWORKING DAY - PRESENTATIONS**

The Council NOTED an email received from Emily Simpson, together with associated documentation in this regard.

**86/26            CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND - PROPOSED REFORMS TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated an email received from the Director, as follows, together with associated documentation in this regard:-

*As you will be aware, the government is currently consulting on radical changes to planning rules. In our view, while there are some details to be welcomed, overall the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):-*

- *Are highly centralising, further reducing the scope of local communities and their elected representatives to shape the places where they live, work and play;*
- *Double down on unrealistic and undeliverable housing targets, opening the door to yet more speculative and unplanned development, which largely benefit landowners, land agents and a relatively small number of large development companies, and not people struggling with unaffordable rents, house prices or homelessness;*
- *Fail to sufficiently prioritise essential infrastructure, or sustainable travel;*
- *Undermine the idea that we should develop in ways that protect the ability of future generations to live well, and ignore the ecological underpinnings of all life;*
- *Place countryside - whether formally 'Protected' or undesignated - under significant threat, and in doing so, harm wildlife, habitats, food security and other critical land uses.*

*Coming on top of the 'pay to trash nature' reforms of the Planning and Infrastructure Act, threats to protections for National Parks and National Landscapes (aka AONBs) under the Fingleton Review, and a government positioning nature and local communities as 'blockers' to economic success rather than building blocks, this is extremely worrying.*

*I have attached CPRE Sussex's response to the current consultation, highlighting these issues in much more detail. We would very much encourage you to respond to the consultation and to make your views known to the Secretary of State, Steve Reed.*

There are a number of changes in the proposed draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that we broadly support. These include:-

- *The ongoing commitment to a plan-led approach to land use and development*
- *The facilitation of the return of regional-scale strategic planning, with the advent of long-term Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) - although this must be supported with the much-delayed Land use Framework*

- *The encouragement of development within existing settlement boundaries*
- *The focus on (gentle) densification within existing settlements*
- *The format change by substituting paragraphs with policy numbers, to synchronise with Local Planning Authority (LPA) plan usage.*

The Council NOTED this information and AGREED to take no further action in this regard.

**87/26      BLUE PLAQUE FOR DAME MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated information received from Ms Chris Merry in this regard.

She said that although Dame Fawcett had not lived in Rustington, she had stayed with her sisters who did, and on the day that the Representation of the People Act was passed on 6 February 1918, she had attended the Littlehampton United Reformed Church to make a speech and celebrate the achievement of the first votes for women.

She confirmed that a Blue Plaque would be being placed at an appropriate location on the external wall of the Church on 18 April 2026 at 10.30 am, with the Mayor of Littlehampton in attendance. She said that the Chairman of the Council had been invited but was unfortunately unable to attend. She said that she was happy to represent the Council on the day.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

**88/26      COUNCILLORS' SURGERY - 21 MARCH 2026**

Councillors Mrs Cooper, Mrs Partridge and Ms Revell reported on their attendance at the Councillors' Surgery held on 21 March 2026. They referred particularly to representations regarding pot holes and overhanging trees.

The Council NOTED this information.

**89/26      RUSTINGTON CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE**

In the absence of Councillor Stevens, the Clerk reported on her behalf regarding the Meeting of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce that she had attended on 10 March 2026 as follows:-

**Events (Internal)**

- All events to be published via Eventbrite
- It was agreed that Eventbrite fees would be incorporated into the ticket price rather than subsidised
- The first planned social event would be a wine tasting evening, to be held at a licensed venue
- A potential future event on Making Tax Digital was discussed
- Training sessions and guest speaker events to be held at the Samuel Wickens Centre
- Councillor Mrs Stevens to enquire about the availability of discounted rates or the potential use of Section 106 funding for venue hire as previous
- The Committee discussed the possibility of hosting events outside of Rustington and whether such events would remain eligible for Section 106 funding

**Membership**

- The implementation of Mailchimp was being explored to manage member communications in compliance with GDPR requirements
- Consideration to be given to whether a disclaimer was required for existing email contacts
- A review of all email accounts associated with RCTC to be undertaken

## **General Discussion**

- The Committee discussed the geographical scope of Chamber membership, including Rustington, East Preston, Angmering, and Littlehampton
- It was noted that there were currently members based in Worthing
- The repurposing of collection tins to support a new Chamber Project would be discussed further upon the return of Mike and Christine Broomfield
- The possibility of offering a discounted membership rate for those joining later in the year was considered
- The matter of updating bank signatories was reiterated

## **Future Meetings**

- 12 May
- 14 July
- 8 September
- 10 November.

The Clerk said that she would arrange to meet with Councillor Mrs Stevens to discuss the items highlighted for the Council's consideration as soon as practicably possible.

The Council NOTED this information and the Chairman, on behalf of the Council, expressed thanks and appreciation to Councillor Mrs Stevens for her most comprehensive Report.

## **90/26        RUSTINGTON SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB**

The Clerk reminded Members that she had previously circulated email correspondence between the Deputy Clerk and the Chairman of Rustington Sports and Social Club.

She referred to Minute 4/24(b) (Leisure and Amenities Committee Meeting - 19 February 2025 refers) and said that the Club was now moving forward with its plans to extend the building to improve the changing room facilities, and were hoping to add a disabled toilet facility within the same area.

Following a brief discussion, the Council was happy to NOTE the plans as submitted.

## **91/26        DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED**

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

- (a) Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice - Supporting Our Community Through Winter - ACCA News
- (b) Arun District Council - Fraud Prevention
- (c) CAGNE - March Newsletter
- (d) East Preston Parish Council News - 26 February 2026, 5 March 2026, 12 March 2026 and 19 March 2026
- (e) National Association of Local Councils - Chief Executive's Bulletin - 5 March 2026, 12 March 2026 and 19 March 2026
- (f) National Association of Local Councils - Clear Councils Newsletter
- (g) RHS - March Community Gardening Update
- (h) Southern Water - Improvements to your water network
- (i) Turning Tides - Let's talk about the Elephant in the Room!
- (j) West Sussex County Council - Highways, Transport and Planning - Major Projects Update
- (k) West Sussex County Council - News Release - 20 February 2026, 23 February 2026, 24 February 2026, 25 February 2026, 27 February 2026 x2, 3 March 2026 x3, 5 March 2026, 13 March 2026 x2, 16 March 2026 x2, 17 March 2026 x3, 18 March 2026, 19 March 2026 and 20 March 2026 x2
- (l) West Sussex County Council - Residents' eNewsletter - Recycling Special

- (m) West Sussex County Council - West Sussex Emergency Management - Air Quality Alert
- (n) West Sussex County Council - West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service - News Release -  
27 February 2026
- (o) WSALC Newsletter - Spring 2026

**There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 8.09 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 - 23 MARCH 2026

### 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 2024/2025, and also the Interim Audit for the current financial year, 2025/2026 (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 2025/2026 financial year, will be carried out on 1 June 2026, 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.

10 March 2026

Clerk of the Council

Caroline Harris  
Rustington Parish Council

17 June 2025

Dear Caroline

**Rustington Parish Council**  
**Final Internal Audit 24-25**

The internal audit for the 24-25 financial year is now complete. I am pleased to report that I have signed off the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for with no comments.

The Council will need to mark box 7 on the Annual Governance Statement for 24-25 as “No”, because of recommendations raised by external audit. Whilst I believe the external audit reporting to be excessive, this must be done to avoid further comment. Details are set out in section N of this report.

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 24-5. Recommendations are set out at Appendix A. I set out a schedule of tests not completed at this audit at Appendix B, these tests are not relevant to this Council.

The audit was carried out in two stages. The interim audit was carried out on 20 January , with the year end audit completed when I visited the Council on 17 June.

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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 1.4.24 against the audited prior year annual return and can confirm these have been brought forward correctly. Box 7 on the audited accounts for 23-24 was £523,846. This agrees to the period 0 balance sheet on Sage at 1.4.24.

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 September 2024. VAT of £8,603 was reclaimed, this was paid in to the Council's bank account on 12 November 2024. I checked that balances in the return could be agreed to schedules produced from the accounting system. VAT outstanding was agreed to the balance sheet at 30.9.24, so I am satisfied that the VAT control account is fairly stated. The next VAT claim, for the period of October to December 2024 is being worked on at present and is due to be submitted by mid-February.

**Final Audit**

The accounting statements have been agreed back to year end reports produced from the Sage accounting system. Agreement was to the following reports from Sage:

- Income and expenditure – profit and loss report
- Balances carried forward – balance sheet
- Cash and short term investments - Cash balances on balance sheet.

Comparative figures have been agreed to audited accounts for 23-24 published on the Council website.

I confirmed that the VAT return for period January to March 25 has been completed and submitted to HMRC. This has a SAGE generated submitted date stamp of 29 April. VAT of £10,152 was reclaimed, and paid into the Council's bank account by HMRC on 6 May. VAT reclaimed has been agreed to a schedule of transactions on the Sage VAT report for quarter 4 24-25. There is a small imbalance on the VAT control account. VAT reclaimed at 31.3.25 was £10,152, the Sage balance sheet is showing a balance of £10,174 for VAT owed to the Council, the difference is £22. This should be reviewed and cleared.

The Council reviewed my interim audit report at the March meeting of Full Council, as part of the annual internal audit review – minute 75/25. Minutes show proper consideration of points raised.

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### **B: Financial Regulations & Payments** **Interim Audit**

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were last 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.). Financial Regulations are now out of date, and do not incorporate changes made to the NALC template in April 2024. The Council has identified inconsistencies between NALC template standing orders and financial regulations, and has contacted the County Association. This should be followed up, and the financial regulations review completed before the end of the financial year.

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.

I selected a sample of 10 transactions from the cashbook for the period April to December 2024. 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

I note that additional councillor signatories are have now been set up, four councillors plus Clerk have been set up to ensure adequate contingency arrangements are in place in case of absence. 2 signatories are required to authorise all payments.

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

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## **Final Audit**

Non pay expenditure per box 6 to the accounts amounted to £ 581,463 up from £515,091 in 23-24 .

The Council has reviewed Financial Regulations and Standing Orders since my last audit, these were approved at the Full Council meeting in March 2025 ( minutes 76 and 77). I have reviewed the Financial Regulations, these are published on the Council website, and can confirm these are now up to date with NALC templates.

I tested 6 further payments from months 8-12 and confirmed the following:

- Payment per cash book agreed to invoice
- Expenditure appropriate for this council
- Invoice signed off by Clerk and 1 councillor on face of invoice
- Payment list approved by 2 councillors by email and with physical signature.
- VAT accounting correct

The RFO confirmed that payments are approved at bank by one of 2 signatories ( Clerk and one councillor). The RFO confirmed that 4 councillors are now set up to authorise payments – this addresses a recommendation I raised in my 23-24 audit.

## **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 1.10.24 until the policy is cancelled”.

Asset cover appeared consistent with the asset register. 6 buildings are insured, at an insurance value of £5.9 million . Asset coverage is set out below.

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Item description	Excess	Amount Insured
Total Buildings	£250	£5,883,846
Gates and fences	£250	£35,108
Fixed outside equipment	£250	£56,562
Street furniture	£250	£366,998
War memorials	£250	£55,620
Playground equipment	£250	£190,083
Sports surfaces	£250	£27,944
Other surfaces	£250	£0
Rent receivable	£250	£0

Buildings were last revalued for insurance purposes in 2023. This is in date per the terms of the insurance policy.

The Council has separate cyber insurance with Coalition. This was in place at the time of my audit, with renewal due in November 2025.

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 a recent email that this drive is included in the Council's data back-up routines, and that the back up is tested every three months.

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 160/24).

### **Final Audit**

The risk register and risk management strategy was considered at the March meeting of Full Council (minute 80/25). I have reviewed the risk assessment and it appears sufficient for a council of this size. There is evidence of update in year.

### **D. Budget, Precept & Reserves**

#### **Interim Audit**

The Council is in the process of finalising the budget and precept for 25-26. Finance Committee approved the budget in December, with Full Council approval due at meeting on 27 January. I will review the formal approval at my year end audit.

I have confirmed that regular budget monitoring reports are issued to all councillors and to Finance Committee. I have reviewed minutes and a monthly report was delivered to the November 24 meeting of the committee. A detailed report is produced from the accounting system, together with a short explanation of any variances within the budget report. I am satisfied budget monitoring is occurring regularly as required by Financial Regulations.

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## **Final Audit**

Reserves at 31 March 2025 were £606,600 (23-24 £523,846).

Year- end earmarked reserve balances are set out below:

### Earmarked Reserves:

Grant Funding (AirS)	2,470.00
Chaucery Memorial	1,560.71
Building Improvement Fund - W.Centre	8,391.97
CIL Funding	4,179.68
Legal Fees (WPSF) - New Lease	500.00
Website Upgrade	500.00
Opportunity Purchases Fund	1,515.50
Equipment Renewal Reserve	4,153.61
Museum Reserve	2,826.76
Capital Reserve Projects (1)	100,000.00
Capital Reserve Projects (2)	123,909.17
Section 106 Funding Account	21,583.34
Total Earmarked Reserves	£271,591

This leaves a general reserve of £335K. This represents 42% of precept, which is at the mid- point of recommended levels set out in the NALC Practitioners' Guide. ( minimum recommended general reserve balance is 25% of net revenue expenditure). I again note that the Council has very small earmarked reserves for asset maintenance, given the size and age of the asset base at this Council, from which the Council received significant income streams. The Council should ensure that adequate reserves are set aside for maintenance of the extensive asset base , this should be considered carefully before setting the 26-27 precept.

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The Council has finalised the budget setting process for the 25-26 financial year. The precept was approved at the Full Council meeting on 27 January 2025 – minute **10/24 b)** following recommendations made by the F&GP Committee. A precept of £786,000 was set. The final budget for 25-26 was approved at the March meeting of Full Council (minute 78/25).

I note that the Council has submitted a PWLB loan application for the capital works at Woodland Centre. I remind the Council to:

- Ensure financial regulations are followed when letting contracts for works on this project
- Finalise VAT advice to ensure VAT recovery is maximised
- Ensure adequate contingency is included in the budget for the project

### **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 24-25 had been properly approved at meetings of the Council. Invoices for hall bookings are generated from the Hallmaster system. This is a diary based 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 9 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 bank interest payment from CCLA. There was a small difference between the amount credited from CCLA and the value of the credit recorded on the monthly statement – the RFO has contacted CCLA about this.

I reviewed the Council's debtors ledger. At the time of my audit debts outstanding were £77K. The balance was high due to recent invoices raised to Store Property and Arun DC. Debts over 60 days were £2,099, one debt with Rustington Sports and Social is 99% of this balance. This is being followed up by the RFO. The sundry debtors ledger is well managed.

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**Final Audit**

Precept per box 2 to the accounts was £786,000 (23-24 £759,000). This has been agreed to third party documentation provided by central government.

Income per box 3 to the accounts was £287,927 (23-24 £188,423).

I reviewed a four further income credits from the final four months of the financial year, amounting , mainly room hire income ( other areas tested at the interim audit). I tested income per sage back to invoice, and from there to room booking on the booking system. A credit for sponsorship income was agreed to a contract for floral display sponsorship,

The sales ledger at 31.3.25 was reviewed. Balances outstanding were £15K, no debt older than 30 days, so the sales ledger has been brought up to date since my last audit.

**F. Petty Cash**

Petty cash is held at the office , museum and information centre. Books and receipts are brought into the office every month. Year-end balance was £220. There is evidence of a year-end count on the petty cash books. Count was completed by the Finance Officer, reviewed and signed by the RFO and a councillor - councillor review checked to petty cash book.

**G. Payroll**

**Final Audit**

Staff costs per box 4 to the accounts were £409,710 ( 23-24 £394,414).

Payroll is processed in house using the Sage payroll application. The Finance Officer sets up the payroll each month for members of staff, and posts changes such as approved overtime to the payroll. Payroll is then run by the RFO and reviewed by the Clerk. Once this has been approved, payments are set up on the bank account. Payroll is reviewed by councillor signatories who sign off the payroll and approve the bank payments.

I reviewed the February 2025 payroll. The nominal ledger posting for February was agreed to payroll month end outputs from Sage. Individual staff payments were agreed to Sage payroll documentation, and authorisation by 2 councillors was confirmed to the payroll file

Pension payments and HMRC payments were agreed from bank back to SAGE payroll reports. I confirmed submission of payroll data to HMRC by checking output from Government Gateway.

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## H. Assets and Investments

### Final Audit

Fixed assets per box 9 to the accounts were £ 3,126,587 ( 23-24 £3,086,790) – increase of £39,797

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.

The RFO supplied a schedule of movements on the fixed asset register to explain the year on year movement. Additions have been added to the asset register at cost and a schedule of deleted items has been provided.

- Additions to the asset register - £106K – the main items are expenditure on the MUGA - £47K / stage lighting system - £10K / outdoor fitness equipment £30K – all added to the asset register at cost, as required by regulations.
- Deletions from the asset register - £67K. Christmas lights with an asset register value of £24K were scrapped alongside old outdoor fitness equipment, with an asset register value of £29K.

The RFO has provided a clear audit trail for changes to the asset register in 24-25 and these have been accounted for in line with regulations.

## 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 and within minutes of the Finance Committee. The December 2024 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following.

- The bank statements and the bank reconciliation had been signed off as checked 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 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. This should be actioned before the end of the financial year, and the Council should look to improve returns on cash holdings where possible.

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### **Final Audit**

Borrowings per box 10 to the accounts were £nil (23-24 £ nil)

Cash per box 8 to the accounts was £634,092 (23-24 £587,440)

I reviewed the bank reconciliation file. I was able to note that the bank reconciliation has continued to be completed promptly throughout the financial year, and that there is evidence of councillor review of the bank reconciliation at least quarterly, as required by Financial Regulations.

I reperfomed the year end bank reconciliation. I agreed all balances in the bank reconciliation back to the accounting system reports and to bank statements. The year end bank reconciliation was found to be accurate and evidence of review on both the reconciliation and the bank statements was provided by a councillor.

Investment policy review has been completed since my last audit. ( March meeting Full Council ). Council resolved to retain cash in current accounts, pending expenditure on capital works at Woodland Centre.

### **J. Year-end accounts**

Rustington PC 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. There is also a variance analysis in place for review by external audit.

### **L: Exercise of Public Rights - Inspection of Accounts**

Inspection periods for 23-24 AGAR were set as follows

Inspection - Key date	23-24 Actual
Accounts approved at Full Council	20 June
Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published	25 June – website
Inspection period begins	26 June
Inspection period ends	6 August
Correct length	Yes 30 working days

All regulatory requirements were met.

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**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**

Yes, the Council meets the requirement of the Code by publishing information on the Council website, mainly on the Financial Transparency page. I checked that the following information was up to date at the time of the interim audit:

- Payments data – published to end of March 2025 - monthly finance report
- CIL Report for 23/24 – published on the website

**N: Publication requirements 23-4 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 24 September 2024 before the statutory deadline of 30 September. The external auditors issued their audit certificate on 29 August. The Council has met its obligations in this area. The Council was informed of the outcome of the audit at the meeting on 23 September 2024( minute 226/24).

The external auditors qualified the audit certificate – see below

Box 11a was not initially completed on Section 2 Accounting Statements when the form was submitted. The form was resubmitted with a 'No' answer to Box 11a which was in line with our expectation. Whilst this was amended with no further concerns, this issue was also raised on the prior year's External Audit Report and hence this issue was not appropriately actioned. The Council therefore should have answered 'No' to Assertion 7 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to taking appropriate action on matters reported from internal and external audit.

I consider this to be an excessive response from the external auditor, for a minor omission by the Council. However, given that the omission occurred in 24-25, for completeness the Council should mark assertion 7 as "NO" in 24-25

**0. Trusteeship**

The Council disclosed that it was not a sole trustee for a trust fund in the 23-24 AGAR. The RFO confirms this is still the case.

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# April Skies

Accounting

I attach my invoice for your consideration together with the internal audit report from the AGAR. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help with the audit. I look forward to working with you again next year, in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

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## Appendix A

### Matters Arising Interim Audit

<b>Matter Arising</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Council Response</b>
<p>Financial Regulations are now out of date, and do not incorporate changes made to the NALC template in April 2024. The Council has identified inconsistencies between NALC template standing orders and financial regulations, and has contacted the County Association.</p>	<p>This should be followed up, and the Financial Regulations review completed before the end of the financial year.</p>	<p><b>Reviewed and amended at March 25 Full Council</b></p>
<p>I also tested a bank interest payment from CCLA. There was a small difference between the amount credited from CCLA and the value of the credit recorded on the monthly statement</p>	<p>The RFO has contacted CCLA about this.</p>	<p><b>Balanced at year end audit</b></p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The policy should be reviewed annually, as set out in section 4 of the Investment Policy. This should be actioned before the end of the financial year, and the Council should look to improve returns on cash holdings where possible.</p>	<p><b>Reviewed and amended at March 25 Full Council</b></p>

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## Appendix A

### Matters Arising Final Audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
<p>I again note that the Council has very small earmarked reserves for asset maintenance, given the size and age of the asset base at this Council, from which the Council received significant income streams.</p>	<p>The Council should ensure that adequate reserves are set aside for maintenance of the extensive asset base, this should be considered carefully before setting the 26-27 precept.</p>	<p><b>Agreed - Arrangements for an Inspection of the Council's buildings to be arranged in order that an earmarked reserve can be considered before the next precept is set.</b></p>
<p>I note that the Council has submitted a PWLB loan application for the capital works at Woodland Centre</p>	<p>I remind the Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure financial regulations are followed when letting contracts for works on this project</li> <li>- Finalise VAT advice to ensure VAT recovery is maximised</li> <li>- Ensure adequate contingency is included in the budget for the project</li> </ul>	<p><b>Noted - Finance Manager already in contact with Parkinson Partnerships for advice.</b></p>

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**APPENDIX B**

**Internal Audit Control Objectives – Marked as not covered**

<b>Control Objective</b>	<b>Area for Audit</b>	<b>Why this has not been audited</b>
K	Exemption from limited assurance review	Council had limited assurance review in 23-24
0	Trusteeship	No Trusts

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Caroline Harris  
Rustington Parish Council

9 December 2025

Dear Caroline

**Rustington Parish Council**  
**Interim Internal Audit 25-26**

Following the interim audit completed on 8 December , 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 25-26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). I covered the following at this visit:

- Review of opening balances and reporting of 24-25 audit opinion
- Follow up previous recommendations
- Review of accounting and VAT processes
- Testing of income and expenditure first 8 months of financial year
- Risk management and insurance
- Budget monitoring reports and
- Arrangements for inspection of accounts
- Bank reconciliations.

I am pleased to report that the Council has successfully maintained a robust system of financial control, and I have identified no matters to date that would result in a negative opinion on the year- end internal audit report. At Appendix A I list recommendations arising from interim audit work on the 25-26 internal audit.

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.

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## **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 1.4.25 against the audited prior year annual return and can confirm these have been brought forward correctly. Box 7 on the audited accounts for 24-25 was £606,600. This agrees to the period 0 balance sheet on Sage at 1.4.25.

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 September 2025. This was submitted to HMRC on 3/11/25. VAT of £13,686 was reclaimed, this was paid in to the Council's bank account on 12 November 2025. I checked that balances in the return could be agreed to schedules produced from the accounting system. VAT outstanding on the balance sheet at 30.9.25 was £13,826. There was a small imbalance on the SAGE VAT account of £140. This should be checked when the quarter 3 VAT return is completed, and any imbalance between the VAT return and VAT control account cleared.

## **B: Financial Regulations & Payments**

### **Interim Audit**

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were both reviewed at the Full Council meeting in March 2025 – minutes 77 and 76. Both documents are based on NALC templates.

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.

I selected a sample of transactions from the cashbook for the period April to November 2025. 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 ( 3 transactions tested)
- VAT accounting correct
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council

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I note that the Council has incurred costs on seeding and draining a football pitch. It is recommended that consideration is given to applying to the Football Foundation for funding for pitch maintenance – link attached. [Football Foundation | Grass Pitch Improvement](#)

The Council has appointed a project manager for the Woodland Centre Project. The RFO confirmed that the contracts for this project will be let following financial regulations, these are set out in Appendix I of the financial regulations. I remind the Council to ensure adequate financial contingency is included in the Woodland Centre project budget to cover

- inflation costs
- hire fees lost whilst the building is unavailable
- Unexpected additional costs that may be identified once the project commences.

Whilst the Council is in a reasonable financial position for day to day activities, there is limited scope to absorb contingencies on a major project.

## **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 1.10.25 until the policy is cancelled”.

Asset cover appeared consistent with the asset register. 7 buildings are insured, at an insurance value of £6.1 million . Asset coverage is set out below.

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Premises address	Sum insured
Woodland Centre, 34 Woodlands Avenue, Littlehampton, BN16 3HB	£3,136,613
Changing Places Toilet, 79 The Street, Littlehampton, BN16 3NL	£166,662
Public Toilets, Broadmark Lane, Littlehampton, BN16 2JA	£106,127
Beach Shelter, Beach Shelter, Littlehampton, BN16 2LZ	£60,856
Churchill Car Park & Conveniences, Churchill Parade Car Park, Littlehampton, BN16 3DJ	£126,828
Youth & Community Building, Youth & Community Building, Littlehampton, BN16 3HB	£1,478,453
Rustington Sports & Social Club, Rustington Sports & Social Club, Littlehampton, BN16 3NB	£1,102,500

Item description	Excess	Amount Insured
Total Buildings	£250	£6,178,039
Gates and fences	£250	£43,257
Fixed outside equipment	£250	£7,704
Street furniture	£250	£382,829
War memorials	£250	£57,289
Playground equipment	£250	£226,791
Sports surfaces	£250	£28,782
Other surfaces	£250	£0
Rent receivable	£250	£0

Buildings were last revalued for insurance purposes in 2023. This is in date per the terms of the insurance policy.

The Council has separate cyber insurance with Coalition. This was in place at the time of my audit, with renewal due in November 2026.

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 RFO has contacted the IT provider who confirmed back ups are working effectively, that these include Sage data. The last back up test was completed in October 2025.

For 25-26, an additional assertion has been added to the Annual Governance Statement, this covers digital and data compliance. The Council is largely compliant with the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide in this area. For clarity, it is recommended that the Council considers compliance with paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 on page 14 of the Practitioners' Guide at a meeting before the end of the financial year. This should support a positive response on the Annual Governance Statement.

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### **D. Budget, Precept & Reserves**

#### **Interim Audit**

The Council is the process of finalising the budget and precept for 26-27. Committees have approved budgets, and the overall budget will be finalised once the council tax base has been confirmed. The budget and precept is due to be confirmed at January Full Council. I will check minutes at my year end audit.

I have confirmed that regular budget monitoring reports are issued to all councillors and to Finance Committee. I have reviewed minutes and a monthly report was delivered to the November meeting of the committee. A detailed report is produced from the accounting system, together with a short explanation of any variances within the budget report. I am satisfied budget monitoring is occurring regularly as required by Financial Regulations.

### **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 tested a sample of credits recorded on the ledger for the first 8 months of the financial year. I tested

- sage entry to invoice raised
- checked invoice was raised at the correct rate, as approved by Council

I reviewed the Council's debtors ledger. At the time of my audit debts outstanding were £19K. Debts over 60 days were £3k, one debt with Rustington Sports and Social is 90% of this balance. This is being followed up by the RFO. The sundry debtors ledger is well managed.

### **F. Petty Cash**

Year end review

### **G. Payroll**

Year end test

### **H. Assets and Investments**

Year end audit

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## 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 and within minutes of the Finance Committee. The September 2025 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following.

- The bank statements and the bank reconciliation had been signed off as checked by the reviewing councillor, Councillor Lee
- 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 Council has an investment policy in place, as required for any council with cash and investment assets in excess of £100K. This was last reviewed in March 2025.

## J. Year-end accounts

Year end audit

## L: Exercise of Public Rights - Inspection of Accounts

Inspection periods for 24-25 AGAR were set as follows

Inspection - Key date	24-25 Actual
<b>Accounts approved at Full Council</b>	23 June
<b>Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published</b>	24 June – website
<b>Inspection period begins</b>	25 June
<b>Inspection period ends</b>	5 August
<b>Correct length</b>	Yes 30 working days

All regulatory requirements were met.

**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**

### **Interim Audit**

Yes, the Council meets the requirement of the Code by publishing information on the Council website, mainly on the Financial Transparency page. I checked that the following information was up to date at the time of the interim audit:

- Payments data – published to end of November 2025 - monthly finance report
- CIL Report for 24-25 – published on the website

### **N: Publication requirements 24-25 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 23 September 2025 before the statutory deadline of 30 September. The external auditors issued their audit certificate on 28 August. The Council has met its obligations in this area. The Council was informed of the outcome of the audit at the meeting on 22 September 2024( minute 228/25).

The external auditors raised one item in the other matters section of the certificate

The published Notice of Public Rights requires the name/signature of the person placing the notice to be entered at (e) on the form. Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Paragraph 15(2) states the declaration should be signed by the responsible financial officer. We note that the clerk has signed the notice which does not comply with regulations, in future we would anticipate this to be the responsible financial officer.

The Council should take care to follow external audit recommendations next June, although I consider this a minor administrative point. External audit have made no recommendation regarding the 25-26 Annual Governance Statement.

### **0. Trusteeship**

The Council disclosed that it was not a sole trustee for a trust fund in the 24-25 AGAR. The RFO confirms this is still the case.

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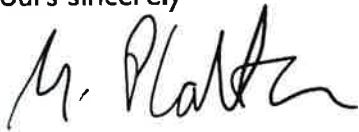
Company Registration Number 14174016  
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

# April Skies

Accounting

I would like to thank you for your assistance with the audit. I will be in touch in the new year to make arrangements for the year end audit. In the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

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**Matters Arising Interim Audit**

**Appendix A**

<b>Matter Arising</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Council Response</b>
There was a small imbalance on the VAT account of £140.	This should be checked when the quarter 3 VAT return is completed, and any imbalance between the VAT return and VAT control account cleared.	These items were entered into the accounts system after the VAT Return was produced but dated after the closing date. This will rectify itself on the next VAT Return.
I note that the Council has incurred costs on seeding and draining a football pitch.	It is recommended that consideration is given to applying to the Football Foundation for funding for pitch maintenance – link attached. <u>Football Foundation   Grass Pitch Improvement</u>	The Deputy Clerk advised that this had been looked into and believed it was not appropriate for this Council.
I remind the Council to ensure adequate financial contingency is included in the Woodland Centre project budget to cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inflation costs</li> <li>• and hire fees lost whilst the building is unavailable</li> <li>• Unexpected additional costs that may be identified once the project commences.</li> </ul>	Whilst the Council is in a reasonable financial position for day to day activities, there is limited scope to absorb contingencies on a major project.	This matter is included in the budget papers for when the Council considers its Income & Expenditure Requirements for 2026/2027.

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<p>For 25-26, an additional assertion has been added to the Annual Governance Statement, this covers digital and data compliance. The Council is largely compliant with the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide in this area.</p>	<p>For clarity, it is recommended that the Council considers compliance with paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 on page 14 of the Practitioners' Guide at a meeting before the end of the financial year. This should support a positive response on the Annual Governance Statement.</p>	<p>The Committee were reminded that the Council had agreed to subscribe to Council Hive Professional Services (CM271025) to support it through the AGAR Assertion 10 requirements.</p> <p>This will be reported back to the Council on a regular basis.</p>
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# 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
<b>A Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year</b>	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>B The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</b>	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
	Debit Credit Cards	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
<b>C The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these</b>	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 25-26 - I need to check arrangements are in place to get this approved at Full Council before 31 March. I don't actually need to see the risk assessment if it has not been approved yet, but I need to check arrangements are in place
<b>D The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate</b>	26-27 Budget plans	Outline plans for budget and precept setting and key dates for approval of final budgets in Jan / feb
	Budget v Actuals reporting in year	Most recent budget report for members plus budget v actual reports from finance system
		Evidence of reserves being considered in budget setting and monitoring

<b>E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</b>	fees and charges	Minutes of council meeting showing approval of fees and charges for 25-6
	Income transactions	Cashbook for year to date - I will select a sample from this for verification
	Debtor Accounts	Details of any debts outstanding at date of audit - debtors ledger or similar supporting documentation for any grants / receipts above £500
<b>F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</b>		Any petty cash - if so details of last count
<b>G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</b>	test staff paid correct rate of pay	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  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,
<b>H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</b>	year end	Discuss process for asset register update in course of 25-26
<b>I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.</b>	Bank reconciliation	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
<b>J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis</b>	year end	Receipts and payments only possible if income / expenditure below £200K
<b>L - compliance with transparency code for Councils under £25K and over £200K</b>	website	Small councils ( under £25K) website reporting of AGAR and inspection rights . Large Councils ( over £200K ) Full Transparency Code compliance.
<b>M Inspection - Council met responsibilities to allow public inspection of the accounts</b>	Inspection regulations followed	Please send me the inspection of accounts notice for 24-5 accounts
<b>N - publication 2022 Agar</b>	website reporting of audited 24-25AGAR	Conclusion of audit and accounts / governance statement and external audit certificate on website
<b>O Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.</b>	check statutory documents completed	Confirm charity commission submissions up to date . Confirm separate charity accounting and meetings - only if applicable.
<b>Digital and Data compliance</b>	Compliance with SAPP April 2025	Email management - Every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com for example.
		All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment

# RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## FINANCIAL REGULATIONS [ENGLAND]

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on  
24 March 2025

Revised on 23 March 2026

## 1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. They are one of the Council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
  - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified;
  - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place;
  - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the Council, or a Committee or an Officer, to allow something to happen;
  - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *the Practitioners' Guide*;
  - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners' Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales;
  - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the Council cannot change;
  - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the Council to its Members and Staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the Council. The RFO:
  - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
  - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;

- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of Council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.6. **The Council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

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

1.7. In addition, the Council shall:

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

## 2. Risk Management and Internal Control

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

2.2. The Clerk with the Deputy Clerk and RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, a risk assessment covering all activities of the Council. This assessment and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

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

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

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

2.5. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a Member other than the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, shall be

appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The Member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements, or similar document, as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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

### 3. Accounts and Audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
  - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate;**
  - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council.**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them, with any related documents, to the Council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The Council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or Member of the Council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

- 3.8. The Council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
  - reports to the Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
  - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - has no involvement in the management or control of the Council.
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
  - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
  - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
  - direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in the Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

#### **4. Budget and Precept**

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the Council must calculate its Council Tax Requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Council annually for the following financial year.
- 4.3. No later than January each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be

carried forward by placing them in an earmarked reserve with the formal approval of the full Council.

- 4.5. Each Committee shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Finance and General Purposes Committee no later than the end of December each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget, with any Committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and a recommendation made to the Council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget, the Council shall determine its Council Tax Requirement by setting a budget. The Council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any Member with Council Tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the Council.

## **5. Procurement**

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. Every contract shall comply with the Council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.3. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.4. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the Council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.11) obtain prices as follows:

- 5.5. **For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.**
- 5.6. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.7. For contracts less than £30,000 including VAT the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes.
- 5.8. Where the value is between £5,000 and £9,999 excluding VAT, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.9. For smaller purchases, the Clerk Deputy Clerk or RFO shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.10. **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.11. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
  - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
  - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
  - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.12. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the Council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.13. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.14. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO, under delegated authority, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT;
  - the Clerk, Deputy Clerk or RFO, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate Committee, for any items between £1,001 and £2,500 excluding VAT;
  - a duly delegated Committee of the Council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items between £2,501 and £4,999 excluding VAT;

- in respect of grants, a duly authorised Committee within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the Council;
- the Council for all items over £5,000.

Such authorisation must be supported by a Minute in the case of Council or Committee decisions or other auditable evidence trail.

- 5.15. No individual Member, or informal Group of Members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a Resolution of the Council or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 5.16. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by Resolution of the Council or a duly delegated Committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.
- 5.17. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises, the Clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £10,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.18. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.19. Wherever possible, an official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.20. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

## **6. Banking and Payments**

- 6.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the Council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a Committee. The Council has resolved to bank with National Westminster Bank.
- 6.2. The Council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the Council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the

work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the Council before being certified by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.

- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the Council, unless the Council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the Finance and General Purposes Committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two Members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
  - i. any payments of up to £1,000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget;
  - ii. payments between £1,001 and £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises;
  - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (or to comply with contractual terms), where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
  - iv. fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements up to the sum of £100,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The only exception where a transfer may exceed the sum of £100,000 will be upon receipt of the Precept. All transfers are signed off by the Clerk, Chairman or Vice-Chairman and another Authorised Signatory or in their absence two other Authorised Signatories.

- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation (retrospective), forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall (retrospectively) authorise payment by resolution. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the Minutes of that meeting.

## **7. Electronic Payments**

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the Council shall identify a number of Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the Council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the Council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated Committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories, with an explanation/overview of payments being made.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Evidence shall be retained showing which Members approved the payment online.
- 7.7. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting and appended to the Minutes.
- 7.8. With the approval of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised Members.
- 7.9. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the Finance and General Purposes Committee provided that each payment is approved online by one authorised bank signatory, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the next Meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council as part of the periodic review of the Financial Regulations.
- 7.10. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Clerk or the RFO. This is a potential area for fraud

and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers periodically.

- 7.11. Members and Officers shall ensure that any computer used for the Council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.12. Remembered password facilities, other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification, should not be used on any computer used for Council banking.

## **8. Cheque Payments**

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment over £200 in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two Members.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment, over £200 shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting. Any signatures obtained away from Council Meetings shall be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the next convenient Meeting.
- 8.5. An Imprest Account shall also be maintained at the bank with a monthly limit of £3,000 and cheques, not exceeding £200 each, shall be signed by the Clerk of the Council, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee or in their absence other Authorised Signatories. These Accounts will be replenished on a monthly basis from the appropriate Current Account.

## **9. Payment Cards**

- 9.1. Any debit card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by the Council or Finance and General Purposes Committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council or the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council or the Finance and General Purposes Committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and/or RFO.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, RFO, Senior Members of Personnel and Leisure and Amenities Officer and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT.

## **10. Petty Cash**

- 10.1. The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £250 and may provide petty cash to Officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
- a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment
  - b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations
  - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

## **11. Payment of Salaries and Allowances**

- 11.1. **As an employer, the Council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillor allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the Council, or a duly delegated Committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the Council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full Council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

## **12. Loans and Investments**

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full Council and recorded in the Minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full Council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The Council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council periodically.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

## **13. Income**

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The Council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the Council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The Council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be deposited intact with the Council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt is entered into an Income Book together with the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the Council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation or some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 13.8. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council Meeting.

#### **14. Payments Under contracts for Building or Other Construction Works**

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Council and the Clerk or Deputy Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

#### **15. Stores and Equipment**

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

#### **16. Assets, Properties and Estates**

- 16.1. The Clerk or Deputy Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the Council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £1,000. In each case a written report shall be provided to Council with a full business case.

## **17. Insurance**

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the Council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk or Deputy Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Council at the next available Meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
- 17.4. All appropriate Members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or duly delegated Committee.

## **18. Charities**

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

## **19. Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations**

- 19.1. The Council shall review these Financial Regulations from time to time and following any change of Clerk or RFO. The Clerk or RFO shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the Council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The Council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant Meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all Members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the Council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The Council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

## **Appendix 1 - Tender Process**

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the proper officer shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the proper officer in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the Council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the proper officer in the presence of at least one Member of Council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the Council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order Number 8 a to f, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the Council, or duly delegated Committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

## INVESTMENT POLICY

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the treasury management procedures for the monitoring of the cash flow and banking arrangements of Rustington Parish Council.
- 1.2 Authority reference is to the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 1.3 The Local Government Act 2003 Section 12 provides the power to invest (a) for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or (b) for the purpose of the prudent management of its financial affairs. Section 15(1) of the Act requires a local authority to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 The Council acknowledges its duty of care to the community and the prudent investment of funds.

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The Council's priorities are, in the following ranking order:
  - (i) The security of capital to minimise the risk of losses
  - (ii) The liquidity of investments to meet the cash flow needs of the Council
  - (iii) Maximising income within the framework of the national economic situation.
- 2.2 The Council will aim to achieve a high rate of return on investments commensurate with adequate safeguards of security and liquidity.

### **3. INVESTMENTS**

- 3.1 All investment and deposits will be with UK registered Banks or Building Societies.
- 3.2 All investments, deposits and interest will be in £ sterling.
- 3.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of Rustington Parish Council.
- 3.4 Investments for current expenditure will be on instant access deposit accounts with a daily feeder to the current account.
- 3.5 Investments not required for current expenditure i.e. the general reserve may be placed on longer term deposits of up to two years.
- 3.6 Investments not required for current expenditure i.e. earmarked reserves may be placed on medium term deposits not exceeding one year.

- 3.7 In order to spread the financial risk to a minimum, investments will be made with a minimum of two financial institutions.
- 3.8 The credit ratings of the institutions will be a minimum of 'A' and these will be monitored regularly.
- 3.9 The management of this Policy will be by the Clerk and Finance Manager (RFO) and reported to each Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.

#### **4. REVIEW**

- 4.1 This Policy will be reviewed by the Full Council on an annual basis. Any variation to the policy will be submitted to the Council for approval.

*(Adopted March 2020)*  
*(Revised November 2023)*  
*(Reviewed March 2025)*  
*(Reviewed March 2026)*

## 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
<b>Precept</b>	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.

<b>Financial Records</b>	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.  New Financial Regulations to be approved by the Council on 24 March 2025	Existing procedures adequate. The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the Financial Regulations when necessary and make recommendations to Full Council. NALC have updated the Model Financial Regulations and these will be placed before Full Council for consideration on 24 March 2025.
<b>Bank and Banking</b>	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.
<b>Cash</b>	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.

<b>Reporting and Auditing</b>	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.
<b>Direct Costs Overhead Expenses Debts</b>	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.
<b>Grants and support - payable</b>	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.

<b>Grants - receivable</b>	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.
<b>Charges - Rentals payable</b>	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.
<b>Charges - Rentals receivable</b>	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.
<b>Best Value Accountability</b>	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		

<b>Salaries and associated costs</b>	<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.
<b>Employees</b>	<p>Fraud by staff</p> <p>Health &amp; 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 &amp; Safety Policy reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Monitor Health &amp; Safety requirements and insurance requirements annually.</p>
<b>Clerk</b>	<p>Loss of Clerk</p> <p>Health &amp; 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>
<b>Councillor Allowances</b>	<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.

<b>Election Costs</b>	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. Election costs are paid retrospectively to the District Council in the following financial year and a adequate budget is set.	Existing procedures adequate.
<b>VAT</b>	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedures adequate.
<b>Annual Return</b>	Submit within time limits	L	The Council's Annual Return is completed and submitted online to to the External Auditors appointed by the Small Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) 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
<b>Business Continuity</b>	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>
<b>Legal Powers</b>	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.
<b>Minutes Agendas Notices Statutory Documents</b>	<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>Agendas are displayed on Parish Noticeboards.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Members to adhere to the Code of Conduct.</p>

<b>Council Records - Paper</b>	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.
<b>Council Records - Electronic</b>	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.

<p><b>Insurance</b></p>	<p>Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>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. Price Fidelity checks are in place. Price comparisons are undertaken for Best Value.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate. Review of insurance provision annually. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance - This is set at £782,000, 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 was considered by the Council at the Meeting 19 May 25. The risk was properly discussed and considered and the Council resolved to increase insurance cover - see Minute 142/25</p>
<p><b>Data Protection</b></p>	<p>Policy Provision Breach of Confidentiality Breach of Data Protection Principles</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>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. Extensive Data Protection review and Assertion 10 compliance training undertaken by Personnel and Councillors March/April 2026</p>	<p>Ensure annual renewal of Registration and compliance with GDPR.</p>
<p><b>Freedom of Information Act</b></p>	<p>Failure to comply with the Act</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Act. Publication Scheme last reviewed 24 March 2025.</p>

<b>Meeting Location</b>	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.
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ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
<b>Community Buildings:-</b>  <b>Woodlands Centre</b>  <b>Samuel Wickens Centre</b>  <b>Youth Centre</b>	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.
<b>Play Area and MUGA (Basketball Court) and Outdoor Fitness Equipment</b>	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 completed Spring 2025.	Existing procedure adequate.  Maintain liaison with Police and ASB Team.  Review insurance requirements annually.

<b>Allotments</b>	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, using specialised Allotment Management Software, 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.	

<b>Museum</b>	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 will be undertaken as part of the Woodlands Centre major refurbishment project. NB new racking installed in 2023 and objects being rationalised for possible disposal. Archeology Collection 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.	
<b>Noticeboards</b>	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.	
	Roadside safety			

<b>Public Seats</b>	<p>Risk/Damage/Injury to third parties</p> <p>Roadside safety</p>	L	<p>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.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Full audit of all public seats to be undertaken by Summer 2026.</p>
<b>Woodlands Recreation Ground and Woodland Park Sportsfield</b>	<p>Loss or Damage/Vandalism</p> <p>Risk/Damage to third party(ies) - personal injury</p> <p>Inadequate insurance cover</p> <p>Loss of Grounds Maintenance Contractor</p> <p>Inadequate maintenance of Parish Council owned machinery</p> <p>Lone Working</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>An Asset Register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items.</p> <p>Daily Checks are made by Parish Council personnel. Any vandalism is recorded and reported to Sussex Police.</p> <p>Grounds Maintenance is undertaken by an external contractor.</p> <p>Should the contractor be unable to fulfill their duties the Parish Council Leisure and Amenities Officer would undertake works in the interim.</p> <p>Parish Council machinery is routinely maintained.</p> <p>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>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p>

<b>Shelters</b>	<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.
<b>Public Toilets</b>	<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 February 2025.</p>
<b>Civic Regalia</b>	Theft/Loss or Damage	L	Insurance is in place and reviewed annually.	Existing procedures adequate.

<b>COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H/M/L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
<b>Members Interests</b>	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 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 Finance Manager/RFO in their capacity as Hall Hiring Manager, the Leisure and Amenities Officer, the Council Office's Administrative Officer and Assistant (The Woodlands Centre) and the Samuel Wickens Centre Administrative Assistants and Museum Personnel, 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 Officer and Assistant 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 vehicle. 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 Council Office's Administrative Officer and Assistant, in conjunction with the Finance Manager/RFO in their capacity as Hall Hiring Manager, are 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 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 Museum Manager or their Deputy 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 Officer and Assistant 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 Administrative Officer and Assistant in conjunction with the Finance Manager/RFO in their capacity as Hall Hiring Manager, 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 Deputy Manager 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 Samuel Wickens Centre Administrative Assistants and Museum Personnel 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	-	Marble M&E Group Limited
Fire Alarm System	-	Marble M&E Group Limited
Emergency Lighting	-	Marble M&E Group Limited

## **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](http://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 2026)*