

Reports in August 2020

7.1 New Community Centre – Cllr Whittle

Since the consultation closed we have been working on the revised designs. We have considered a range of points, such as

- Relocation of playground – decided against due to pinch point near MUGA and this is the wettest part of the site.
- Change weather boards from horizontal – to vertical – agreed
- Increase storage – range of increased storage throughout building
- Kitchen - Revised kitchen design following discussions with professional catering companies

The detailed plans are on the website and have been circulated to Cllrs.

A pre-application meeting with TWBC Planning Department has been agreed for late August 2020 and the aim is to submit a planning application in early autumn 2020.

Proposal

That the Council agree the designs in principle, subject to any final amendments at the pre-application meeting with TWBC submit a planning application early autumn 2020.

If required, come back to Council September 2020 but aim to submit planning application early autumn.

7.3 Internal Statement of Control – Cllr Taylor-Smith

The agreed Internal Audit 2019/20 (13.7.20/7.1) included the action to adopt an Internal Statement of Control. The SAP Committee have reviewed, drafted now recommend the attached Statement of Control in **appendix A**.

Proposal - Agree the Internal Statement of Control attached in appendix A

7.4 Appointment of Solicitors – Heartenoak Recreation Ground – Cllr Escombe

We were approached by UK Power network in March 2002 about installing a High Voltage cable across Heartenoak Recreation Ground. On Thursday 23rd July 2020 we were contacted by UK Power Network that they wanted to start work on site on Tuesday 28th July – for approximately 4 days. We insisted that we have the correct legal papers and Risk Assessment Method Statement. The legal documents arrived on 27th July 2020, but no Risk assessment.

Therefore, we refused access. We have had confirmation that the developer will cover all our costs.

Proposal - To appoint Cripps Solicitor, at no cost to ourselves, to review the documents and act on our behalf.



HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Appendix A



Introduction

Hawkhurst Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for as well as being used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- a) identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives;
- b) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and,
- c) manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been introduced for the Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accords with proper practice as laid down by the Council's Financial Regulations which were last adopted in May 2019.

The Council's Internal Controls

The Council's Chairman

The Council has elected a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and [along with the advice from the Clerk] for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful. The Council reviewed its obligations and objectives and approved the level of precept and individual budgets for the following financial year at its January meeting.

Full Council

The Full Council meets at least once a month and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by reviewing and ratifying the recommendations of the Committees and by receiving relevant reports from the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Strategy, Administration and Projects Committee

The Council's Strategy, Administration and Projects Committee monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters. It makes recommendations to the Full Council.

Risk Management

The Council adopted its risk management strategy in January 2014 and has been compiling risk assessments for relevant risks and activities. The Council will review risk management on annual basis or as required – as highlighted by the 2020 COVID 19 crisis.

The Clerk

The Council appoints a Clerk and a part-time Responsible Finance Officer who act as the Council's advisors and administrators. The Responsible Financial Officer manages and administers the Council's finances and is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations which the Council is subject to and for managing risks as well as ensuring adherence to the Council's procedures, control systems and policies.

Payments

Most payments are currently made by BACS or cheque. All payments are reported to the Council for approval, resolution and minuting.

Two authorised Members of the Council must authorise every payment through authorisation of payments online or signing cheques. The authorised signatories are provided with proof of payment details for new recipients and electronic copies of invoices at the point of payment authorisation.

Bank Reconciliations

According to the Council's Financial Regulations, The Chairman of the Strategy, Administration and Projects, who is not a cheque signatory, is appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts once in each quarter. That Member signs the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of verification.

Internal Audit

The Council has appointed an independent Internal Auditor [Mr David Bucket] who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- financial records
- procedures
- systems
- internal control regulations
- risk management
- reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually.

External Audit

The Council's External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council each autumn.

Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal controls. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls is informed by the work of the:

- Strategy, Administration and Projects Committee;
- Full Council;

- Responsible Financial Officer who is responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and the management of risks;
- Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal controls; and,
- External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, who make the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor;

The Strategy, Administration and Projects Committee take action and report back to Full Council any significant issues which are raised during the year.

Date for next Review: April 2021