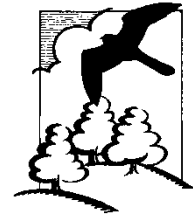


Hawkhurst Parish Council SAP Committee



Report Pack 27.6.2022

Report Title	Consider the Internal Audit Report
Council / Committee	SAP
Previously considered by	
Recommendation	To consider Internal Audit report and make recommendations on actions required to Council
Date	27.6.2022
Author	Cllr Green
Introduction	The Internal Audit Report has already been seen by Council, this considers any actions required.
Detail	SAP To consider Internal Audit report, Appendix A and make recommendations on actions required to Council
Budget implications (Code, amount, quotes)	None
Legislation / Council Policy implications	Good Governance
Council priorities	To seek continuous improvement and best value in all services
Reference	

SAP COMMITTEE – ACTION PLAN 2022/23

Key					
		Not yet started			
		Completed			
		Progressing well			
		Un- satisfactory progress, in need of review			
Outstanding Actions					
No	ISSUE	ACTION	update	WHO	Progress
1	Fit to The Home – fibre broadband	Liaise with KCC / Open reach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Map • Promote voucher scheme in “not spots” • Community Investment Company 	“Not spots” due spring 2022 Concern KCC officers changed and no update on process / new system	SAP	Ongoing
2a	Audit of land and registration	Update on audit / registration Update on opportunities Registering Cemetery and War Memorial	Forwarded details to solicitors – needed original documents to registrar with Land Registry	Clerk	Ongoing
2b			Hand over files to solicitors searching for evidence of ownership on Ockley Allotments and section of Heartenoak	Clerk	Ongoing
2c			KCC three parcels of land	Cllr Green	Ongoing
3	Update Insurance schedule	Task and Finish Group	Report June 2022, then onto Council	Cllr Faulkner	June 2022

4	Review Council Community Grant Aid Policy	Consider review	Report onto Council	SAP	June 2022
5	Review communications Policy	Consider website update, review social media and magazines	SAP to consider	Cllr Green	June 2022
6	Update Corporate Risk Register	Quarterly update	April / Sept / Dec / March	SAP	Ongoing
7	Review list of contracts	Review and agree programme	All discuss	RFO	Ongoing
8	Historical Hawkhurst	Meeting with KCC libraries and Archives Jan 2022	Review filing boxes and report back	Cllr Green	Ongoing
9	Review schedule of policies	Ongoing review as required	SAP consider June 2022 then update action plan	SAP	June 2022

Report Title	Review schedule of Strategies and Policies			
Council / Committee	SAP			
Previously considered by				
Recommendation	Consider and review the schedule of strategies and policies			
Date	27.6.2022			
Author	Cllr Green			
Introduction The Council needs to review it strategies and polices.				
Detail SAP are to consider the schedule of polices and strategies and review the programme				
Budget implications (Code, amount, quotes)	None			
Legislation / Council Policy implications	Good Governance			
Council priorities	To seek continuous improvement and best value in all services			
Reference				
No	Name	Lead Committee	Last review	Next review
1	Council Standing Orders - AMPC	Council	May 2021	As required or May 2023
2	Code of conduct for members - AMPC	Council	May 2021	As required or May 2023
3	Financial Regulations - AMPC	Council	May 2021	As required or May 2023
4	Corporate Risk Register	SAP	August 2021	Quarterly
5	Council Five Year Strategy	SAP	Autumn 2021	As required

6	Asset Policy	SAP	March 2021	March 2023
7	Investment Strategy	SAP	Jan 2021	Dec 2023
8	Allocation of Reserves – part of annual audit	SAP	August 2021	May 2022
9	Complaints Policy	SAP	Dec 2021	As required
10	Community Grant Aid Policy – Section 137	SAP	Dec 2020	As required
11	Active Hawkhurst Strategy – merged Sports, Youth and Play Equipment Strategy	SAP	Jan 2021	As required
12	Cemetery Regulations	F&S	Nov 2019	As required
13	Allotment Regulations	F&S	Aug 2020	As required
14	GDPR Policy	SAP	Jan 2020	As required
15	Section 106 Policy	SAP	Dec 2019	As required
16	Communications Policy	SAP	Oct 2021	As required
17	Tree and Hedgerow policy	FAS	Nov 2019	As required
18	Walking and Cycling Policy	SAP		As required
19	Hawkhurst Emergency Plan – COVID 19	Council	Ongoing depending on Government Guidance	
20	Metal Detecting Policy	SAP	March 2021	As required

21	Freedom of Information Policy	SAP	Feb 2022	As required
22	Retention and Disposal Policy	SAP	August 2021	As required
23	HPC standard contract template	PC	April 2021	As required
24	HPC Disciplinary Policy	PC	April 2021	As required
25	HPC Grievance Policy	PC	April 2021	As required
26	HPC Sickness and Absence Policy	PC	April 2021	As required
27	HPC Expenses Policy	PC	April 2021	As required
28	Health and Safety Statement - AMPC	Council	March 2019	As required or May 2023
29	Statement of Internal Control	Council	May 2021	As required or May 2022
Key				
Council				
SAP				
F&S				
PC				

Report Title	Review of Communications Policy
Council / Committee	SAP
Previously considered by	Sap / Council
Recommendation	to adopt the communications policy, review the Council Website and make a recommendation to Council
Date	27.6.2022
Author	Cllr Green
Introduction Sap were tasked with reviewing the Communication Policy	
Detail Please see attached the Communications Policy for consideration	
Budget implications (Code, amount, quotes)	None
Legislation / Council Policy implications	Standing Orders
Council priorities	To seek continuous improvement and best value in all services
Reference	



Hawkhurst Parish Council

Communications Policy

June 2022

Contents

- 1. Purpose (page 2)**
- 2. Methods of communication (page 2-3)**
- 3. Contact with the media (page 4)**
- 4. Councillors' communication - Code of Conduct (page 4-5)**
- 5. Online communication and social media (page 5)**
- 6. Clerk's responsibilities (page 6)**
- 7. Council Meetings (page 6)**

1. Purpose

Hawkhurst Parish Council wants to be open, accessible and responsive. To deliver this the Council will:

1. develop and implement a communications plan;
2. actively seek the views of residents and stakeholders;
3. actively promote the work of the Council;
4. improve and actively maintain a website; and,
5. improve social media presence.

We aim to reach everyone who has an interest in the Parish – whether they live, work or visit the village. Council stakeholders will include:

- village residents;
- community groups/organisations;
- agencies (e.g. local police);
- local schools;
- County & District councillors, local MP; and,
- local businesses and employers.

We will take a proactive approach to communicating with local residents and other stakeholders and encourage comment from interested individuals and groups. Two-way communication will enable the Council to:

- build trust by being open and transparent;
- give people the information to understand accurately what Hawkhurst Parish Council does and costs;
- better understand the needs and priorities of Parish residents enabling the Council make informed decisions; and,
- be an effective voice of the community.

2. Methods of communication

The Council will use a variety of methods of communication, but for Council communications to be effective they need to be:

- short and to the point;
- courteous and polite;

- in plain English;
- informative, based on facts;
- in a consistent format and style;
- clear about the action required or taken; and,
- respectful of confidential information and peoples' privacy.

<p>Contact details</p>	<p>Contact details for councillors and officers should be published on the website and noticeboards.</p>
<p>Council notice boards & office window</p>	<p>The condition of the Parish noticeboard and Parish office reflect on the Council's professionalism and will be kept in good condition and regularly updated with relevant information about Council activities and events. This enables those who are without access to the internet to keep aware of Council activity.</p>
<p>Council Office & Library</p>	<p>We expect the Parish Office to be open to residents five days a week. Being able to speak to people in person is a key part of our commitment to open communication and accessibility. This includes a Parish Office outreach at the library, and we should see if this could be extended beyond the current usage on a Monday.</p>
<p>Council meetings, agendas & minutes</p>	<p>Members of the public are welcome to speak at the start of a Council meeting, and then remain to hear all public business. The agenda and papers for Council meetings should be published on the website, the Council noticeboards and available for inspection at the Parish Office at least three working days before the meeting. Minutes of meetings will be published once approved.</p>
<p>Annual Parish Meeting</p>	<p>The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting, held in May, is to provide residents with an overview of activity within the Parish. Whilst it provides an opportunity to communicate and discuss Council performance, actions and future objectives, there should also be other speakers on topics of significance to the Parish.</p>

Newsletter	The Council will produce a quarterly newsletter, this will be a combination of soft and hard copy distribution.
Press Releases	Press releases are given to local media on significant points of interest or achievement. They will also be posted on our website and copied to councillors.
Community networking & events	We are committed to involvement with local groups and organisations through contributions to events and/or meetings.
Social Media	The Council will create and maintain an active Social Media presence including (but not necessarily limited to) Facebook via a dedicated Parish Council Facebook Page and a Council YouTube account. We will explore the potential for a Council Twitter account, Council Nextdoor account, and will actively consider other Social Media resources.
External Correspondence	We will reply to external correspondence, both written and electronic in a timely manner. An acknowledgement will be sent within two working days and a substantive reply within two weeks, unless it requires a decision by a committee which may take longer.
Surveys and consultation	Wherever possible the Council will seek the views of residents about its services and plans. This will include inviting comment through consultations and surveys.

3. Contact with the media

All media enquiries should be directed to the Chairman or the Parish Clerk.

Only the Chairman or Clerk are authorised to speak to the media about Council policy. The Chairman may authorise another councillor to make a statement on behalf of the Council. The person responding to the media enquiry should have the necessary facts and understanding and be able speak with some authority.

If Members choose to express their own opinions on Council matters, they must make clear that the views put forward are those of the individual Member and not necessarily representative of Council policy. It would be best practice to discuss media interviews in advance with the Clerk and/or Chairman.

Confidential matters, including items discussed at meetings where the press and public have been excluded, must not be divulged.

Letters or articles representing the views of the Council should be submitted via the Parish Clerk or Chairman.

Comment on matters which are, or are likely to be, subject to legal proceedings should be subject to advice taken from the Council's legal advisor before any response is made.

4. Councillors' communication - Code of Conduct

Councillors are governed by a Code of Conduct which encourages open, informed, timely and courteous communication at all times. Aspects of the Councillors' Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Councillors should comply with the general principles of the Code in what they publish and what they allow others to publish. Councillors need to:

- treat others with respect;
- avoid personal attacks and disrespectful, rude or offensive comments;
- comply with equality laws. Take care in publishing anything that might be considered sexist, racist, ageist or anti-faith;
- refrain from publishing anything received in confidence; and,
- ensure the Council, or the role of Councillor, is not brought into disrepute.

Councillors have no authority to represent the Council's view unless the matter has been agreed at a Council meeting and is a matter of public record, or they have been given specific mandate so to do at a Council meeting, or by the Chairman, or Clerk.

Members may be approached for views and advice. Councillors are free to state any personal view, but should make it clear that their response is from them as an individual Councillor. Care should be taken when stating an implacable position on a planning matter that will come to the Council as could lead to a complaint of pre-determination.

In the unlikely event that a libel or slander action against a Councillor or Clerk writing or speaking with the authority of the Council, the Council may be liable for defending the action. Comments made personally by a councillor are unlikely to be defended by the Council.

All councillors are provided with a Council email address, and currently a Council owned iPad which are to be used for the purpose of conducting council business. Emails received by councillors and the Clerk or other staff may be subject of disclosed requests under Freedom of Information (FOI) or Data Protection (DP) regulations or in the course of legal proceedings. Using personal emails may make those accounts subject to FOI and DP requests.

5. Online communication and social media

Residents expect councils to engage with them via a number of channels including websites and social media.

The Council will maintain a website that will contain a range of information about the Parish and the work of the Parish Council. Material published by the Council online must be objective, balanced, informative and accurate. It will be regularly updated and will include links to other key partners.

Only those persons authorised by the Clerk are permitted to post material, or use the Council's logo, on social media websites in the Council's name and on its behalf.

Councillors have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failures to comply with the law may have more serious consequences. For example, there are certain restrictions on using social media websites for electoral campaigning and extra care also needs to be taken when writing on planning matters.

It is important to remember that what is said on-line is permanently published. Posts can easily be misinterpreted and taken out of context as people viewing them may not be aware of the background of the issue being discussed.

Councillors mentioning council-related matters on their private social media accounts may mean that the Councillors Code of Conduct can apply to all posts. Other issues include:

Libel - If an untrue statement is published about a person that is damaging to that person's reputation, they may take a libel action. This also applies if we do not promptly remove known libellous comments on the website.

Copyright - Placing images or text on any of the Council's websites from a copyrighted source (for example extracts from publications or photos) without first seeking permission is likely to breach copyright. Councillors and Council employees should avoid publishing anything they are unsure about.

Data Protection and confidentiality - Avoid publishing the personal data of individuals unless their written permission has first been obtained. In addition, some information Councillors receive will be commercially sensitive and subject to confidentiality.

Offensive material - The Council will not tolerate inappropriate or offensive use of its social media. It is impossible to write a list of everything that could be seen as inappropriate or offensive. It is likely to include things that could be reasonably considered threatening, discriminatory, harassment of an individual or group, or something that brings the Council into disrepute.

6. Clerk's responsibilities

Unless specified otherwise, the Clerk has overall responsibility for communications with members of the community and outside bodies. The content of the Council's website is managed by the Clerk. If Councillors see any inaccuracy or omissions, they should inform the Clerk.

The Clerk should receive all communications which ought to be formally brought to the attention of the Council. The Clerk should issue all formal communications made by the Council and councillors should not communicate directly with companies/individuals which might put the Parish Council into a new contractual relationship/cost.

Councillors should refer any complaints or concerns relating to the Council received from residents to the Clerk.

In the event of any media enquiry, the Clerk in consultation with the Chair, is responsible for issuing a response from the Council. The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, shall issue a press release on behalf of the Council where it is considered necessary to publicise an activity of the Council.

If a member of the public requests a copy of any correspondence from a councillor, the matter should be referred to the Clerk who will consider whether the correspondence is in the public domain.

7. Council Meetings

The public agendas and papers will be sent to councillors and published on the Council website, put up on the Council Notice Board and in the window of the Parish office and made available for public inspection three working days before a meeting. Approved minutes will be publicised as soon as they are approved.

Agendas should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.

Time will be allocated for a public session prior to the formal start of Council and Committee meetings. Councillors should ensure that they have read and understand any documents for discussion and come to meetings able to make an informed decision or identify information that is required in order for them so to do. Councillors should have regard to potential accusations of pre-determination on planning matters and should retain an open mind.

Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for “information only”, this information will be circulated via the Clerk. Correspondence from the Clerk marked “Confidential” must be treated as such and not be disclosed to anyone.

Report Title	Review of programme of events
Council / Committee	SAP

Previously considered by	
Recommendation	to review a programme of events for the year and forward to Council for consideration
Date	27.6.2022
Author	Cllr Green
Introduction	This year has been a very successful year with a range of events throughout the Country and in Hawkhurst.
Detail	SAP have been asked to review opportunities for the Council to engage with and bring forward a programme of events to Council to consider.
Budget implications (Code, amount, quotes)	None
Legislation / Council Policy implications	C Community
Council priorities	To seek continuous improvement and best value in all services
Reference	