

WINWICK

*Best Kept Village
in Cheshire – 2000*

C/o Winwick Leisure Centre
Myddleton Lane
Winwick
Warrington
WA2 8LQ



PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:
Julian Joinson
Tel: 07818 066549

Email: jjoinson.winwickclerk@outlook.com
Web site: www.winwickparishcouncil.org.uk

18 March 2020

To: All Members of Winwick Parish Council

Dear Councillor

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at the Winwick Leisure Centre on Tuesday, 24 March 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Julian Joinson
Clerk to the Parish Council

NOTE: Having regard to Government advice in relation to the current Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting is not expected to be open to the public and will take place with the minimum number of councillors present to ensure a quorum.

Following this meeting all other scheduled meetings of the Council and its Committees will be suspended until further notice.

AGENDA

1. Chairman to move to Part 2

Part 2

In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council may, by resolution, exclude the public (and press) from the following part of the meeting on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution (including the need to receive or consider recommendations or advice from sources other than members, committees or sub-committees) and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.

The Clerk is available prior to the meeting to give advice and/or to receive details of the interest and the item to which it relates.

Declarations are a personal matter for each Member to decide. The Clerk can advise on the Code and its interpretation, but the decision to declare, or not, is the responsibility of the individual Member based on the particular circumstances.

4. Scheme of Delegation

The Council has not yet developed a formal Scheme of Delegation to its officers, although the powers of officers generally are in accordance with the matters described in their job descriptions. There are however other circumstances under which the Council may need to delegate matters to officers to act, namely in instances of an emergency or urgency where there is no meeting of the Council or relevant Committee available within the necessary timeframe.

The current Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for effective governance to ensure lawful decision making when Council is unable to meet.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Council agree to the following:

- (1) The delegation of the following powers to the Clerk and RFO, as appropriate, except for those matters reserved exclusively to full Council by statute:
 - (i) To act in an emergency situation, or where there is special urgency, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair (or in the absence of either of those Members or where there is a conflict of interest by either, with any other member of the Council).
 - (ii) To act in matters of urgency regarding all other decisions, where it is not practicable to hold a meeting of the relevant body in a timely manner, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and having regard to the views of all members of the Council having providing three clear working days notice in writing of the proposed decision.
- (2) Any decisions taken under (1)(i) or (ii) above and the reason for urgency, to be recorded in writing and reported to the next available meeting of the Council.
- (3) The delegation of powers to Officers to act generally in accordance with the matters set out in their job descriptions.

5. Business Risk/Business Continuity Plans/Health and Safety.

To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer in connection with risks to the Leisure Centre business posed by the Coronavirus pandemic and plans to control or mitigate business risks and the risks to health and safety of staff, service users and the wider public and to approve any necessary actions.

To approve the proposal to suspend all formal Parish Council and Committee meetings until further notice (subject to Agenda Item 7 below).

6. Review of Risk, Internal Controls, Financial Regulations 2019/20

The Council is requested to note and approve the contents of the attached report, which discharges the Council's duty to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of its overall system of internal control. The review must be carried out before the end of the financial year and has to be a full Council decision (it cannot be delegated). The review must also precede completion of the Annual Governance Statement, which is an integral part of the final accounts and audit process for 2019/20.

Approval is also sought to delegation to the RFO of the appointment of the Internal Auditors for 2019/20.

7. Further Council Meetings, Annual Meeting and Parish Assembly

A further meeting of the Council will be required to consider the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts before 1 July 2020 (the decisions cannot be delegated)

It is likely that legislation will provide that no parish elections will be held in 2020. However, the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Parish Council to hold an annual meeting on such day in May as the parish council may determine in a year where there are no ordinary elections.

The Act also provides for an annual parish assembly on some day between 1 March and 1 June, both inclusive, in every year.

Unless new legislation is introduced it may be necessary to hold these meetings, but in strict circumstances so as to comply with the letter of the law without exposing councillors and the public to unnecessary risk.

In the event that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council is unable to take place, approval is now sought to Office holders, Committees and Outside Bodies continuing with the same membership as at present.

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WINWICK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 24 MARCH 2020

REVIEW OF RISK, INTERNAL CONTROLS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 states that a Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which—

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Parish Council (the 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, and 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

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Internal control is designed to reduce financial risk to the Council.

The system of internal control is designed to ensure that the Council's activities are carried out properly and as intended. Internal controls are set up by the RFO but it falls on the Council members to ensure that they have a degree of control and understanding of those controls. Controls will include the checking of routine financial procedures; the examination of financial comparisons; the recording of assets and liabilities; the identification of risk and to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. PERSONNEL INVOLVED WITH THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 The Council:

The Council has appointed a Chair who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful. The Chair signs the last page of the minutes and initials all other pages.

Decisions made should be within the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations laid down and approved by the Council.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January meeting (or earlier). The same meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council receives a monthly financial statement which it approves at its Council meetings. Payments are made in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Chairman will sign the minutes to confirm that the Financial Statement as circulated to members at the meeting has been agreed.

Three signatories in total must sign all cheques. A list of payments with consecutive cheque numbers is circulated to all members each month with the minutes. The signatories will ensure that the cheque agrees with the amount of the invoice and the payee named on the invoice. Where payments are made electronically the RFO and two councilors are required to authorise payments and a list of such payments is reported monthly to the Council.

Each quarter, the Chair shall sign the bank reconciliation and bank statement as evidence of all transactions having been recorded in the accounts.

3.2 Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Council has appointed a Responsible Financial Officer who is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk and RFO also ensure that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are maintained.

The duties of the Clerk and RFO are laid down in Job Descriptions.

The RFO submits all the requested information to the External Auditor by the required date.

The RFO arranges for the public notices to be displayed.

The RFO will retain all relevant documents relating to the financial year for 10 years (Annual Return, VAT Returns, PAYE/NIC information, public notices, Fixed Asset Register, risk assessments, accounts and supporting information)

3.3 Internal Auditor

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who will report to the Council on the adequacy of its:

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

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually, and the Council agrees to the appointment of the Internal Auditor. The Internal Auditor, who is competent and independent, is advised of the scope of the work required by the Council.

The scope of the work (and the charge) of the Internal Auditor is reviewed annually and the review and the appointment is minuted.

The Internal Auditor will inspect the accounts at the year-end (prior to completion of the Annual Return Sections 1 and 2) and will complete page 3 of the Annual Return.

The Internal Auditor will write a separate report to the Council (a copy of which is sent to the Chair) detailing any findings they might have (if any).

The report of the Internal Auditor is copied to all members of the Council and considered as an agenda item at the next meeting. Recommendations from the report will be recorded in the minutes.

3.4 External Audit:

The Council's External Auditors, appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA), submit an External Auditor's Report. which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 requires an annual review of the effectiveness of our overall system of internal control.

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control in each financial year, to be carried out before completion of the Annual Governance Statement. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work and any issues identified by

- Full Council - identification of new activities
- Clerk to the Council and RFO who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks - risks identified
- Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control. The auditor will make a written report to the Council (in addition to the page 3 Report in the Annual Return.) - action arising from reports
- The Council's External Auditors, who make the final check using the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, a suite of forms completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk, the Chair and the Internal Auditor. The External Auditor issues an annual audit certificate - action arising from Audit Report .

A Statement of Internal Control, which summarises the present arrangements, is attached at Appendix 1, although its publication is no longer a statutory requirement.

5. FINANCIAL RISK ARISING FROM HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

The Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of health and safety risks and reviewing them at least annually. Notwithstanding the imperative of eliminating or significantly reducing the risk of harm to staff and members of the public, the Council also seeks to minimise its exposure to the potential financial liabilities arising from accidents and injuries. The Council uses an external consultant to annually review and assess risks throughout all areas and provide a detailed report through the Centre Manager and ultimately the Parish Council. Regular Legionella risk monitoring is performed by an independent source. The Centre Manager performs risk assessments for any new type of event held at the Leisure Centre.

6. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

The financial regulations were last reviewed in July 2019 and are attached at Appendix 2.

Clare Jones, Operations and Responsible Finance Officer
Julian Joinson, Clerk

16 March 2020

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Winwick Parish Council reviews annually the effectiveness of its system of internal control.

In order to manage its risks, the Council has adopted the following arrangements:

1. Internal audit services are provided by RSM in accordance with terms of reference and an audit plan agreed by the Council. The effectiveness of the system of internal audit is reviewed annually and the findings of that review considered by the Parish Council.
2. BM Stock-taking Services undertake a monthly appraisal of the operation of the licensed bar at Winwick Leisure Centre.
3. Financial Regulations are in force and are reviewed biennially. These cover the whole conduct of the transactions of the Council, including the authorisation of expenditure, the control of income, the security of stores and equipment, accounting, audit and banking arrangements, and the payment of salaries, wages and accounts.
4. Internal check via the separation of duties between different members of staff is applied as far as is practicable.
5. Risk assessments are reviewed annually.
6. Insurances arranged through Zurich Insurance cover the following risks: material damage, theft, loss of money. personal accident public indemnity; legal expenses, business interruption and fidelity guarantee.
7. Budget monitoring reports and bank reconciliations are examined quarterly by the Parish Council.
8. The accounts and supporting records of the Council are made available for public inspection for a period of four weeks each year.

Winwick Parish Council
16 March 2020

WINWICK PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of Winwick Parish Council (the Council) and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2. ANNUAL STATEMENTS

- 2.1 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure shall be prepared each year by the RFO.
- 2.2 The estimates shall be submitted to the Council not later than the end of November each year for approval and the Council will then decide the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year.
- 2.3 The approved budget will form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided for it in the budget unless a virement has been approved by the Council.
- 3.2 The RFO shall periodically provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the approved budget.
- 3.3 The Clerk to Winwick Parish Council (The Clerk), in consultation with the RFO, may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision, subject to a limit of £2000, The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter. Minor repairs of up to £500 can be carried out without the need for additional quotations. Repairs between £500 and £1000 require two quotations. Any expenditure over £1000 will require three quotations provided to the Clerk or the Responsible Finance Officer, as specified in the tender documentation, in a sealed bid. Photographs of before and after repairs are also required.
- 3.4 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation no. 3.3 above and the sum required cannot be met from savings elsewhere with the Council's budget, it shall be the subject of a supplementary estimate approved by the Council.
- 3.5 Unspent provisions in the budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless specifically earmarked or of a minor nature.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the current Accounts & Audit Regulations.

- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them to the Council.
- 4.3 The principles of internal control and internal checks will be observed as far as is practicably possible in connection with accounting duties, whilst recognising that the separation of duties between different officers may not always be feasible.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO requires, make available such documents and supply information & explanation as the RFO considers necessary for the purposes of the audit.
- 4.5 The RFO shall be responsible for drafting the Statement of Accounts and other financial information in the Annual Return to the appointed external auditor, and shall submit these to the Council for certification

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.
- 5.2 All payments shall be approved by the Council on the basis of relevant invoices etc. presented by the RFO.
- 5.3 Cheques and electronic payments shall be signed by any three of the authorised signatories, these being the RFO and those members who have indicated they wish to act in this capacity.

6. PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 Apart from petty cash and payments the Council has agreed should be made by cash or direct debit, all payments shall be made either by cheque drawn on the Council's bankers or by an electronic payment authorised as in 5.3 above.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined and verified for payment by the RFO. The RFO must be satisfied that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The RFO shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of receipt.
- 6.4 If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.5 Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened. In whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. **This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.**

- 6.6 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.7 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.8 The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.9 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.10 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.11 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed in accordance with the bank mandate. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND WAGES

- 7.1 The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made or supervised by the RFO in accordance with the payroll records and current HMRC requirements.
- 7.2 Payment of wages in cash must be signed for by the recipient.
- 7.3 The RFO will account to HMRC for all national insurance and PAYE contributions in line with current requirements.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 Any loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council or Millennium Trust Fund (if exists), approved by the Council

9. INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of the RFO. The manager of Winwick Leisure Centre (The Leisure Centre) shall be responsible for accounting to the RFO for all bar takings, room hires and other income received at the Leisure Centre. Weekly bar returns are to be countersigned by a Councillor on a monthly basis.
- 9.2 The raising of hire agreements shall be the responsibility of the Leisure Centre Manager. The raising of all other invoices for monies due to the Council, and the claiming of any grants, shall be the responsibility of the RFO.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report by the RFO.
- 9.4 Any bad debts shall be reported to the Council.

- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked promptly by the RFO.
- 9.6 A reference to the related hire agreement or other identification, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on the documentation accompanying the weekly bar return.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS OR SERVICES

- 10.1 A letter/email shall be issued for all work, goods and services ordered unless a formal contract is in existence or unless such action would be inappropriate (eg petty cash purchases). Copies of letters/emails shall be maintained.
- 10.2 The person ordering the work, goods or services shall ensure, as far as reasonable and practical, that the best available terms are obtained.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1 All contracts shall comply with this regulation and no exception shall be made otherwise than by direction of the Council, though it will not apply to contracts for:
 - (i) the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services
 - (ii) specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants and surveyors
 - (iii) repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment or plant
 - (iv) extensions to existing contracts
 - (v) proprietary articles and/or those sold only at a fixed price
- 11.2 Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £2000 in value, the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms.
- 11.3 If less than three tenders are received, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or services or executing the works, which may include choosing from only the bids submitted without the need to seek additional tenders or quotations.
- 11.4 For expenditure of £2000 or less, the chairman & Clerk shall have executive power and in the case of Minor Repairs/Renewals this power may also be exercised by the RFO and 2 Members of the Management Committee. Where two or more quotations are required and less than the requisite number of quotations are received the decision-maker may choose from only the bids submitted without the need to seek additional tenders or quotations.
- 11.5 The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender.

12. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 12.1 The Leisure Centre manager shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment held in the Leisure Centre.
- 12.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received and goods must be checked as regards quantity and quality at the time the delivery is made.
- 12.3 Stocks shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 12.4 The RFO shall be responsible for supervising an annual check of all stocks & stores.
- 12.5 The RFO shall be responsible for the maintenance of a Fixed Assets Register.

13. PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 13.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council, and shall maintain a full record of all such properties, in accordance with current Accounts & Audit Regulations.
- 13.2 No property shall be sold, leased or disposed of without the authority of the Council, save where the estimated value of any item does not exceed £100.

14. INSURANCE

- 14.1 The RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 14.2 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby, and annually review it.
- 14.3 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

15. VALUE ADDED TAX

- 15.1 The RFO shall maintain records of VAT inputs and outputs, accounting to HMRC for the balance between the two.

16. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 16.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review these Regulations biennially.

16 July 2019

6. LEISURE CENTRE OPERATIONS			
Leisure Centre expenditure in the categories shown below	Up to £50	Preferred Supplier	Bar Manager
Food/Buffer/Event Disbursements	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	RFO, in consultation with Cllrs Gosney and Mitchell
Function Advertising	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	RFO
Entertainment and Package Costs	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	RFO or Bookings Administrator, in consultation with Cllr Matthews
Cleaning Costs	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	RFO, in consultation with Cllr Iddon
Special Night and Complimentaries	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	RFO, in consultation with Cllr Gordon
Advertising	Over £50	Preferred Supplier	Management Committee