

# Hannington Parish Council

## Corporate Governance Questionnaire: *for completion by the Council Chairman, not the Clerk/RFO*

Area	Response (please provide detail below or on supplementary pages)
<p>Please confirm whether or not Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place.  If so, when were they last updated and formally adopted by the Council?</p> <p>(Please provide an electronic preferable) or hard copy of the latest adopted documents).</p>	<p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were approved by the Council at its meeting on 24 April 2012.</p> <p><b>Standing Orders:</b> Amendments to paragraphs 3a and 3b re the role and responsibilities of the Clerk were approved 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016.</p> <p><b>Financial Regulations:</b> Amendment to paragraph 4.3 regarding treatment of unspent balances was approved 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p> <p>[copies of both current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations have already been provided by the Clerk.]</p>
<p>Where original minutes are not provided for our examination, please confirm that each page of the master copy is signed or initialed by the Chairman at the subsequent meeting when they are approved.</p>	<p>The minutes are signed by the Chairman once approved at the subsequent meeting. <b>Draft Minutes</b>, i.e. seen by Cllrs but prior to sign-off at next Council Meeting, are circulated to residents soon after the Council Meeting.</p> <p>[copies of approved Minutes for 2015/16 have already been provided by the Clerk.]</p>
<p>Please provide detail of the approved precept for 2015-16 and 2016-17, including a copy of the relevant approving minute.</p>	<p>The Draft Budget 2015/16 including decision on Precept was agreed by Council 10th December 2014 [Minutes 10].</p> <p>The Draft Budget 2016/17 including request to BDBC for Precept and Grants was considered at the Council meeting 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016 [See Minute 3 (a).]</p>
<p>Has the Council met the criteria for adoption of the General Power of Competence and, if so, has it been adopted. Please confirm minute reference.</p> <p>If reliance is still placed on S.137, etc, when considering the approval of grants and donations to local (and other) bodies, are the relevant powers considered?</p> <p>Please indicate whether these are identified formally in the minutes, or on an appended Agenda paper, for each such payment approved. Where detail is on an agenda paper,</p>	<p>Reliance is still placed on S.137 etc. The Council has made two donations/contributions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>i) financial support to the parochial church for the sum of £250 towards the churchyard maintenance costs. This compares directly with the £200 Specific Grant paid by BDBC towards these costs.</li> <li>Provision for the grant at £250 was included in the Budget 2015-16 and its payment was approved 12 Jan 2016 para 3c.</li> <li>ii) contribution of £5,000 to Michaels Field</li> </ul>

please provide a copy of same.	Development. Approved in principle 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2016 and final approval to release funds by email correspondence 21 March 2016. [Copies of Minutes already provided. By Clerk.]
Please confirm that all internal and external audit reports are presented to and agreed by members, also with agreement on the actions to be taken to address any issues identified. It would also assist if you could provide detail of the relevant meeting and minute reference.	Confirmed. The Audit Statement 2015-16, received electronically by the Clerk 20 May 2015 was circulated to Cllrs 21 <sup>st</sup> May in advance of the Council Meeting. [Details have already been provided by the Clerk in a covering email... see Minutes 21st May 12.a.]
When approving payments for release, do those members signing cheques examine and sign / initial individual invoices. Please provide a brief description of the process on a separate sheet if necessary.	The position has not changed since 2014/15 except in the names of the Cllrs authorised to sign cheques following the May Elections. Cheques are signed by two designated signatories. Paperwork is always provided and checked by those signing the cheques with both the cheque, paperwork and the cheque stub being signed/initialed as evidence of approval. Due to the prolonged delay in Lloyds Bank progressing the changes in signatories, it was necessary for the Clerk to make personal payments on behalf of the Council. These payments were reported back to and approved by the Council 21May 12.c The Clerk is NOT a designated signatory.
Are <u>all</u> payments by direct debit, bankers' standing order or internet, if in use, similarly examined and approved for payment by members? If not, what controls are in place over such payments (i.e. how do members validate the payment as appropriate?)	The Parish Council does not make any payments electronically. <u>December 2013 - Min 10d</u> <u>Electronic Payments</u> – Cllrs noted the recent advice from HALC that Parish Councils could in future make electronic payments. However, Cllrs noted that the Council makes so few payments in a year and that the introduction of internal controls necessary to safeguard payments and to reduce risk of fraud would be disproportionate, <b>and so agreed to continue to make payments by cheque</b>
Does the Council / a nominated member review the detail of bank reconciliations routinely throughout the year and verify detail to underlying cashbooks and bank statements?	The Parish Council makes very few payments in the year enabling the Financial Statement and Bank Statement to double up as the 'cashbook'. At each of the FOUR meetings in the year, the Agenda includes a Financial Report. This FR is supported with a spreadsheet analysis of all payments made to date shown in each of the relevant four periods (together with a projection of any payments estimated still to be paid by the end of the year.) The statement includes opening and closing cash balances (actual to date and projected at year end). The Actual cash balance shown on the spreadsheet is reconciled to the extract of the bank statement for the period covered e.g. from Feb 2015 (prior year) through to date of Council meeting. [A copy of example Financial Report can be provided by the Clerk]

<p>Please provide a brief description of the approach taken to the preparation and approval of the Annual Budget and Precept.</p>	<p>Financial Statements comparing actual spend to date and planned spend for the remainder of the year against each of the subjective headings are presented by the Clerk to the PC at each meeting. This statement is also summarised for the December – Budget Setting meeting where information showing: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) actual spend compared with Budget spend for the previous year;</li> <li>ii) predicted spend compared with Budget for current year, and</li> <li>iii) DRAFT Budget for the next year is discussed...</li> </ul> <p>Information received to date from the funding authority (BDBC) on their proposals for Precepts and Grants is also considered. This process results in an agreed Budget with the necessary grant and precept requests. The PC does not usually have any other Income source apart from the refund of VAT payments incurred in the previous year. However, in 2014-15 the Parish Council received a Bequest of £5,000 from Miss Margaret Nicholl. This has been the subject of numerous reports to the Council. The balance of £5,000 was released by the Council on 21 March 2016. The final decision on the Budget 2016-17 was deferred from the December 2105 meeting to a special meeting in January 2016 where a separate report on the remuneration of the Clerk and its impact on the Budget and precept was held.</p>
<p>Does the Council formally consider and approve the level of reserves (General and Earmarked Funds) to be carried forward to the next financial year? (Such consideration should be minuted formally).</p>	<p>Yes,</p> <p>The Budget Report 2016-17 included predictions of cash balances as at 31 March 2016 and 2017,</p> <p>Extracts from Jan 2016 Minutes 3.a: -</p> <p><i>"The effect these [large one-off payments] have had in recent years in reducing the General Reserve/cash balance from £5,900 as at 31 March 2014 to the £3,800 being predicted as at 31 March 2016; a fall of £2,100 (35%)"</i>,</p> <p>and</p> <p><i>"The Clerk had circulated, in advance of the meeting, an outline Budget 2016/17, based on the latest financial position in the current year. The report was not substantially different to that previously circulated to the December meeting, projecting a cash balance as at 31 March 2017 £4,012".</i></p>
<p>Has a physical examination / verification of the Councils stock of assets been undertaken</p>	<p>Yes, ALL Assets are in regular use and therefore scrutinized. For instance, the Noticeboards were refurbished three years ago,</p>

recently? If so, when and by whom?	and the Wellhead had a major rebuild in 2014-15.
Do members consider formally whether these assets should be included on the Council's insurance schedule or be regarded as "self-insured"?	The PC has a comprehensive insurance policy based on a detailed asset register.
Are asset values based on purchase cost net of VAT (where known)? Where detail of the purchase cost is unknown, asset values should be reported on the Annual Return at the same value as the previous year, except where new assets are acquired or disposed of.	<p>The advice from the auditors 2013-14 was duly noted - see annual return for application of this accounting method.</p> <p>The only new asset in 2013-14 added to the Asset Register was the purchase of a wooden bench at the White Lane crossroads.</p> <p>The value of the Wellhead has been increased as at 31 March 2015 to allow for the costs (net of VAT) incurred in its rebuild.</p> <p>The external auditor had initially suggested that the cost of the hound's teeth should be added to the Asset Register, but following further explanation from the Parish Council agreed to withdraw this recommendation.</p>

**Certified by Chairman:** .....

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Name in full:** Simon Taylor