

**COCKING PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**5 JUNE 2023, 6.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Miss F Russell (Chair), T Carter, A Cornwell, Cllr D Imlach, Mrs J Jackson, W Renney and D Summerfield.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** G Burt, Clerk to the Council  
Dis Cllr Jess Brown-Fuller  
15 Members of the Public

**1. Apologies**

None

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Members and officers were invited to make any declarations of pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and were reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then became apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue was to be considered.

Cllr D Summerfield declared an interest as a resident with a gate onto Cowdray-owned land, ref. correspondence relating to a footpath.

**3. Questions from Visitors**

Several residents commented on the inconvenience that the now-locked gate on the path leading from The Croft to the Recreation Field was causing. They confirmed that the route had been used in excess of 20 years, maybe 70!!!! There were no signs indicating it was not a public right of way, so it was in their opinion a permissive footpath. Would the Parish Council seek to get it added to the Definitive Map?

The Chairman reported that she had met with the landowner's agent who was very amiable and who had promised to go away and look into the matter in more detail; she seemed keen to want to reach an amicable agreement. The Chairman would rather come to a mutually beneficial agreement than to resort to more formal means.

In the meantime the gate would remain unlocked. Residents spoke of the need to somehow not make the route public, but ensure residents could use it.

**4. To receive reports from County & District Cllrs.**

Dis Cllr Jess Brown-Fuller was delighted to attend and see so many members of the public; she had previously circulated a report.

**5. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 9 May 2023, previously circulated were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None / covered elsewhere.

## 7. Planning

Comments on applications were **RESOLVED** as follows.

Ref. No	Address	Details	Comment
SDNP/23/01971/OHL	Cocking (Hill Barn) Car Park Cross Roads of A286 and Hillbarn Lane Hillbarn Lane	Electricity Act 1989: Overhead Lines (Exemption)(England and Wales) Regulations 2009: Addition of an extra pole into existing lines in the agricultural field to the rear of Cocking Hill Car Park (Reference: Location1 - MIDHE4L5).	NO OBJECTION

## 8. Cocking Village Hall - To consider new agreement.

DEFER pending minor changes.

## 9. Highways Updates

- a. Footpaths & Footways – Cty Cllr Richardson had confirmed that the footway alongside the A286 north of the village would be cleared by WSCC’s contractor after the end of the grass cutting season.
- b. Cycleways – nothing to report.
- c. Traffic Calming – Community Speedwatch – ongoing.
- d. Other – speed limit signs on the bridge in Bell Lane had been stolen.

## 10. Updates on Parish Matters

- a. Playground – nothing to report.
- b. Village Hall – Exterior painting was underway. New fire door fitted - bark surface of path to rear needs topping up
- c. New Platinum Jubilee Noticeboard – This was now being sourced from *Green Barnes*.
- d. Seat at Crypt Lane – this has now been replaced. Thanks to all involved – it looks FAB!

## 11. Finance

- a. Payments since last meeting were **RESOLVED** and any receipts NOTED – Appendix **A**.
- b. Bank Reconciliation to 15 May 2023 was **RESOLVED** – Appendix **B** and the corresponding bank statement was subsequently initialled by the Chairman.

- c. The Receipts & Payments accounts to 31 March 2023 were **RESOLVED**  
- Appendix C.
- d. The 2022-23 Internal Audit Report had been received - Appendix D. Members were pleased to see that once again no matters of note had been raised.
- e. **RESOLVED** that Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) of the 2022/23 Annual Return be approved - Appendix E.
- f. **RESOLVED** that Section 2 (Accounting Statements) of the 2022/23 Annual Return be approved - Appendix F.
- g. Under the Transparency Code, Councils with a turnover (income or expenditure) of less than £25k in the year just finished did not have to submit their accounts etc to External Audit (although they still had to complete the same paperwork.). However, Councils finding themselves in this position could elect to send them to External Audit if they wished. Members considered that sending accounts to External Audit, showed that the Council was transparent and open and gave reassurance to residents that the accounts were being fully scrutinised. **RESOLVED** to send the 2022-23 accounts to the External Auditor even though they were not required to.
- h. **RESOLVED** that R. S. Hall & Co. be reappointed to undertake the Internal Audit for the forthcoming year 2023-24.

## **12. Grant Applications**

**RESOLVED** that an application for a grant of £150 to Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) be supported, in accordance with S137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **13. Any Other Matters for Information**

A group had asked if they could use the Boules pitch to the rear of the play area and if so, could the Council arrange for it to be tidied? The Clerk would respond that they would be welcome to use it but if they required it to be maintained to a higher standard beforehand they would be welcome to tidy it themselves, or the Council could arrange the works at cost price.

A Cllr commented that much of the centre of The Croft green had not been cut, meaning it could not be used for games etc.

## **14. Date of Next Meeting**

**Monday 3 July 2023 6.30pm**

*The meeting closed at 7.35pm*

Chairman:

Date:

APPENDIX A

INCOME & EXPENDITURE SINCE LAST MEETING TO 4 JUNE 2023

EXPENDITURE

				NET	VAT	GROSS
04/06/2023	Mulberry & Co.	821	x3 Cllr training	£246.00	£41.00	£205.00
04/06/2023	4 Sight Vision Support	822	Grant	£100.00		£100.00
04/06/2023	G Burt	823	Clerk salary - May	£241.85		£241.85
			Printer paper	£7.50	£1.25	£6.25
04/06/2023	HMRC	824	Clerk Tax - May	£60.40		£60.40
				<b>£655.75</b>	<b>£42.25</b>	<b>£613.50</b>

APPENDIX B

BANK RECONCILIATION				
<b>CASHBOOK</b>				
Balance brought forward as at 01/04/2023		£9,677.73		
Add Total Receipts		8,774.00		
Less Total Payments		(1,071.86)		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£17,379.87</b>	◀	
<b>BANK</b>				
Lloyds Treasurers A/C (15/05/2023)		18,441.33		
<b>Less unrepresented cheques</b>				
1034	188.06			
815	100.00			
818	61.40			
819	452.00			
820	260.00			
		-1,061.46		
<b>Plus unrepresented deposits</b>		-		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>17,379.87</b>	◀	

TALLY

## APPENDIX C

<b>COCKING PARISH COUNCIL 2022-23</b>		
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Balances b/f at 1 April	13,622.40	13,622.40
<b>Receipts</b>		
Precept	13,567.00	13,567.00
Grants received	2,000.00	6,431.67
VAT refund	1,500.00	
Other		
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>30,689.40</b>	<b>33,621.07</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
<i>ADMINISTRATION</i>		
Gen Admin/office	400.00	538.03
Website	600.00	443.25
IT	600.00	589.10
Employment costs	3,600.00	3,694.56
Clerks Expenses	500.00	378.00
PC Insurance	1,300.00	1,551.12
Meeting room hire & APM	150.00	165.00
Audit fees	350.00	350.00
Chairman's Allowance	40.00	40.82
Members Travel		
Training	100.00	460.00
Newsletter	430.00	389.97
Elections		
<i>VILLAGE HALL</i>		
Other	700.00	141.05
Ground Rent	287.32	287.32
Car Park imp / maint.	500.00	5,835.00
Cont. to new Hearing Loop	750.00	746.00
<i>SPORTS FIELD</i>		
Ground Rent	200.00	200.00
Grass cutting	1,500.00	1,825.00
Other		
<i>WAR MEMORIAL</i>		
Maintenance	50.00	
Hist Column	20.00	20.00
<i>EVENTS</i>		
Fireworks	820.00	1,416.67
<i>SUBSCRIPTION - WSALC</i>		
	152.27	152.27
<i>GRANTS</i>		
Churchyard	400.00	500.00
Other	500.00	275.00
<i>PLAY AREA</i>		
Maintenance	1,000.00	558.90
Grass Cutting	1,100.00	1,200.00
Inspections	125.00	120.00
Litter bin emptying	130.00	72.00
<i>HIGHWAYS</i>		
Bus Shelters/Noticeboards/bench	300.00	160.15
Footpath maint.	1,000.00	6.90
New noticeboard @ The Croft	1,000.00	
SID		
Other grass -cutting	350.00	
VAT	1,500.00	1,827.23
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>20,454.59</b>	<b>23,943.34</b>
Transfer to following year	<b>10,234.81</b>	<b>9,677.73</b>

**COCKING PARISH COUNCIL**  
**INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

**INTRODUCTION**

An internal audit of the Parish Council's financial records for the year 2022/2023 has recently been completed. The audit included all financial transactions for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive.

The audit was undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, and in accordance with the agreed and accepted Audit Plan.

Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations states that the Parish 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

Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations states that the Parish Council must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, and any officer or member of the Parish Council, if required to do so for the purposes of the internal audit shall -

- (a) make available such documents and records; and
- (b) supply such information and explanations;

The objective of the internal audit is to determine whether the accounting arrangements, procedural controls, records, and documentary evidence are adequate to ensure the accurate and timely recording of financial transactions, so as to comply with all relevant legislation and best practice.

**SCOPE**

The audit included examination of the receipts and payments account for the year; review of spreadsheets; review of bank statements; review of supplier invoices and claims for reimbursement; review of receipts; review of agendas and minutes of meetings; review of budgets; review of fixed asset register and insurance policy; review of payroll records; confirmation that bank reconciliations and reports are prepared regularly and reviewed at frequent meetings of the Parish Council; and confirmation that the Council's standing orders and financial regulations are kept up to date.

**FINDINGS**

- 1) Monies paid and received during the year have been accurately recorded and reconciled to the bank and cash balances.
- 2) The accounting records, minutes, standing orders and other financial information were found to be in good order.
- 3) Risk assessments were reviewed and updated
- 4) The accounting and other records were well maintained, accurate and correctly cross-referenced
- 5) The fixed asset register was not correct. The total for the defibrillator was showing as £1,321.31, whereas it should be £1,342.31. There were no additions or disposals in the year, so the total to record on the AGAR should be the same as last year £295,093
- 6) The website was reviewed for compliance with the Transparency Code

## **SUMMARY AND OPINION**

One of the functions of internal audit is to give assurance to members of the council that the financial systems are operating correctly, and can be relied upon.

In connection with my examination, and having regard to the items reported herewith, no matter has come to my attention that gives me reasonable cause to believe in any *material* respect that the regulatory requirements have not been complied with. Although errors were noted, they did not have any significant financial impact on the figures reported on the annual return.

The accounting arrangements, procedural controls, records and documentary evidence are considered to be satisfactory, and accurately record the Council's financial position.



Rachel Hall (ACA)

7 May 2023

**Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**

We acknowledge as the members of:

**COCKING PARISH COUNCIL**

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		Yes means that the authority:
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
		✓	

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

05/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

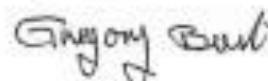
11d.

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman



Clerk



www.cocking.org



## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

## COCKING PARISH COUNCIL

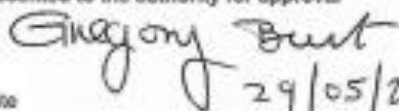
	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	8,962	13,622	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Values must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	13,567	13,567	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	5,358	6,432	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	3,299	3,695	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	10,965	20,248	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	13,623	9,678	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	13,623	9,678	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	295,093	295,093	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

  
Date 29/05/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

05-06-2023

as recorded in minute reference:

11f.

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

