



Stockton Heath Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT STOCKTON HEATH LIBRARY ON TUESDAY 11 July 2023 at
7.30pm.

Present: Cllr H Dutton (Chair)

Cllrs. Barlow, Dean, Gillibrand, Harrison, Jones, Jordan, Murphy, North,
Olsen, Taylor, Todd, Walker and Wheeler.

Attending: L Jacob – Clerk; V Aldred (Assistant Clerk); Cllrs. Mark Browne
and Helen Speed; 2 members of the public.

The meeting started at 7.40pm, following the Planning meeting.

23/041 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Harris.

23/042 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

23/043 Public Participation

043.1 PCSO Monthly Report

The PCSO Team were not available to attend but had provided a written report in advance of the meeting. The report included damage to cars on Ellesmere Road and an update on the measures being taken had been provided ahead of the meeting. In addition, there had been a theft of a bicycle, a motorbike and items from a handbag, a distraction burglary and a break-in to a commercial garage premises. Community engagement with residents had taken place, officers had supported Walking Day and six activations of the TrueCam had been recorded on Walton Road.

043.2 Grappenhall Borough Councillors

The councillors highlighted the Highways Maintenance programme and a forthcoming consultation by Warrington Borough Council on a new bus programme. Information was also provided about progress towards securing the future of a building known as The Rectory in Grappenhall.

043.3 Members of the Public

A resident attended to express an interest in the opportunity for Play Streets to be requested of Warrington Borough Council. The national scheme advises that residents of streets can apply for temporary road closures of a couple of hours to allow children to play safely in the streets where they live. The resident had garnered interest from parents in the street.

[Two members of the public left the meeting; Cllrs. Browne and Speed left the meeting.]

23/044 Minutes

044.1 Parish Council

The minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 13 June 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

044.2 The minutes of the Planning, Finance & General Purposes Committee

held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

23/045 Matters to be resolved from minutes

[Cllr. North arrived at 7.45pm]

Planning, Finance and General Purposes, Tuesday 27 June 2023

045.1 (minute P23/019.1) **Recommended** that a grant of £1,000 be made to Stockton Heath Allotment Association to assist with improvements to roadways and drainage.

Resolved to accept the recommendation.

045.2 (minute P23/019.2) **Recommended** that a grant of £275 be made to the Tuesday Litter Team to assist with purchase of additional litter pick equipment.

Resolved to accept the recommendation.

23/046 Report on actions from previous minutes and on correspondence received

The above reports were noted.

In addition, the following correspondence had been received:

An acknowledgement and thanks from the Walking Day Committee for the award of a grant to help with the costs of hosting the event.

A resident enquiry about the status of the Parish Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Policies.

An enquiry about the siting of a telegraph pole on Whitefield Road by Freedom Fibre.

23/047 Councillors' Reports

The following matters were raised:

A request had been received from Sainsbury's for more litter bins to be provided, particularly outside Dominos on London Road. Cllr, Wheeler will ask WBC if the policy on additional bins has changed.

A resident had enquired about tree cutting in Cawdor Street and been informed that WBC have scheduled works in 2024.

Cllr. Walker is to raise the matter of a safe crossing at the Sandy Lane junction of Grappenhall Road following concerns.

23/048 Working Groups

048.1 Communications

It was noted that the newsletter had been distributed week commencing Monday 3 July 2023, following a delay due to the breakdown of folding equipment at the printers.

048.2 Climate and Ecological Emergency

The group had not met.

048.3 King's Coronation

It was noted that donations had been made to the schools and notes of thanks had been received.

The future of the Working Group was considered.

Resolved that the work of the group was now complete and it could be retired.

048.4 Local Plan Response

No further updates had been received.

048.5 Stockton Heath Festival Stall

The following feedback from the event was received:

Visits to the stall had been slow and steady across the Festival period. Most comments were verbal rather than written; the distribution of flower seeds was welcomed; WBC cycle maps and children's Active Travel magazines had been distributed; there had been interest and interaction with the Climate activities and the information captured would be analysed and reported at a future meeting.

23/049 Reports from Outside Bodies

Warrington Housing Association and Wild about Stockton Heath had engaged with residents in the Limetree Avenue area and a planting day had taken place.

23/050 Highway Maintenance

The Warrington Borough Council proposed highway maintenance list was discussed.

Resolved that the Parish Council will respond as follows:

Roads – the preference was for Egerton Street and Orchard Street to be prioritised, but as these spanned two different options and it was unclear if the borough would consider splitting across these, then the alternative would be the scheme which included Egerton Street and Brookside Avenue.

Footways – the preference was for the “blue” option which included Algernon Street, Pike Street, Warburton Street, Fairfield Gardens, Mertoun Road, Parkgate Road, Millhouse Avenue and Raymond Avenue.

23/051 Air Quality Monitor

Cllr Walker reported that he was working towards a presentation plan for information to be placed on the parish council website and that the next annual report was also due.

23/052 Play Streets

The report enclosed was discussed alongside the comments made by a resident.

Resolved to accept the recommendation to lobby Warrington Borough Council to adopt an easy to access process for requesting road closures for Play Streets and to defer the other recommendations until WBC had responded.

23/053 Tree Survey

053.1 It was noted that a willow tree had come down on Mill Lane Field on 14 June 2023 and that emergency tree surgery had cost £600, with full removal of the tree necessary.

053.2 It was noted that a ground level survey of the trees on Mill Lane Fields and Ackers Pit was carried out on 29 June 2023. There were no issues of immediate concern.

23/054 Recess arrangements

Arrangements for dealing with business during the August recess were discussed.

Resolved that the clerk will refer any urgent matters to the Chair and Deputy Chair for a decision; that decisions on expenditure up to £1,000 in an emergency may be authorised by the Clerk with the agreement of the Chair and Deputy Chair; that the Clerk, Chair or Deputy Chair may call an extraordinary meeting during the recess period if an urgent matter must be discussed by full council. It was noted that the Planning, Finance and General Purposes committee will convene a meeting on Tuesday 22 August 2023, with an additional meeting on

Tuesday 8 August 2023 earmarked for any planning applications which need to be considered.

23/055 Future Agenda Items and Items for Publicity

The following items were agreed to be placed on a future agenda, publicised through the website, newsletter or by report to the press and media:

Presentation from the Neighbourhood Team; update on progress with Play Streets; update on Air Quality Monitor data presentation; update on Local Plan; update on WBC response to Highways consultation.

Newsletter to be placed on parish council website.

23/056 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12 September 2023, 7.30pm

The Chair, Cllr. Dutton gave apologies ahead of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9pm.



Stockton Heath Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning, Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 22 August 2023, commencing at 7:30pm at Stockton Heath Library.

Present: Cllr. C Jones (Chair)

Cllrs. Dutton, Harris, Todd, and Walker.

Attending: L Jacob (Clerk)

P23/045 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Murphy and Wheeler. Cllr. North was absent.

P23/046 Declarations of interest

No declarations were received.

P23/047 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

P23/048 Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 25 July 2023 and the extra Planning meeting held on 8 August 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

P23/049 Accounts for Payment

Resolved the approval of the payments of the accounts as detailed on the schedule of payments dated to 22 August 2023. To be authorised in internet banking by Cllrs. Jones and Todd.

P23/050 Receipts

The receipt of a cheque for £690 from the Stockton Heath Allotment Association in respect of the annual rent charge for Red Lane Allotments had been received and banked.

P23/051 Statement of Receipts and Payments to date 2023/24

The Statement for the period to 31 July 2023 was noted. The statement showed an excess of £2.20 held in the bank compared to the totals on the cashbook; total expenditure to date of £50,295.92; cash in hand of £229,452.21 of which £116,921.08 has committed budget lines and £112,533.33 represents uncommitted funds.

P23/052 Pavement Café Licensing Application

052.1 A response to the Pavement Café Application by London Café, 49 London Road, Stockton Heath WA4 6SG was discussed and agreed:

Whilst Stockton Heath Parish Council are supportive of businesses, there is a concern that many pavement licences are in operation with the result that this particular application may harm public safety and add to public nuisance. A consideration should be given to the reduction of the number of tables from the proposed 4 to two and of the chairs from the proposed 8 to four. In addition the ability to use A-board type displays should be prohibited.

052.2 It was noted that since the relaxation of the regulations governing pavement cafes during Covid-19, many premises had made applications or merely put tables and signs outside their premises without application. Cllr. Wheeler has informed the WBC Enforcement team of instances and these are being investigated by WBC.

P23/053 Budget Timetable

The proposed timetable for the setting of the budget for Financial Year 2024 – 2025 was considered and agreed.

P23/054 SLCC Conference

The attendance of the clerk at the Society of Local Council Clerk's Conference, held at Hinkley Island, Leicester on 11 and 12 October 2023 was discussed.

Resolved that the clerk may attend the Conference, with the cost of £499 to be met from the Training Budget.

P23/055 Planning Applications

055.1 **To note** one application received as follows:

2023/00961/TPO

12 Marlborough Crescent, Stockton Heath, Warrington, WA4 2EE

Remedial pruning to 2x trees INFORMATION ONLY

055.2 There were no notifications of refused planning applications and one application passed by the WBC Development Management Committee:

2023/00785/FULH 70 Fairfield Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington, WA4 2UU

Proposed detached annexe

055.3 No other planning issues were raised.

P23/056 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

P23/049 Schedule of Payments

The following accounts are submitted for approval and payment by the Committee from the agreed budget for 2023/24

Payee	Goods or Service provided	Budget Heading	Net	VAT	Gross
Internet Banking Transfers					
Staff Costs	Staff Salaries (Sept – to be paid 20/09/2023)	People Costs	4872.00	0.00	4872.00
Warrington Foodbank	Donation	Grants	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
Northwich Town Council	4 x watering of planters in July	Village	500.00	100.00	600.00
WAP Lawton	Tarmac repair to Kissing Gate entrance Ackers pit	Land Assets	940.00	188.00	1128.00
Cheshire Constabulary	PCSO Q1 Charges Apr – June 2023	PCSO	4744.75	0.00	4744.75
		Total Bacs	12056.75	288.00	12344.75
Debit Card Transactions					
BT	Quarterly Telephone and Broadband Charges	Office Costs	167.25	33.45	200.70
		Total for Debit Card	167.25	33.45	200.70
Direct Debits					
Natwest (applied 17 August)	Bank Charges	Office Costs	25.85	0.00	25.85
Wavenet (to be applied c. 25 August)	Office 365 Monthly Subscription	Office Costs	9.40	1.88	11.28
		Total direct debit	35.25	1.88	37.13
		Total all payments	£12259.25	£323.33	£12582.58

Financial Regulations

Background

The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually. Financial Regulations are the written rules of a local council which describe the procedures and processes followed in discharging its financial functions and lawful obligations. The Financial Regulations are based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (the current model financial regulations were released in 2019; Stockton Heath Parish Council is now in membership of ChALC, the local association and therefore has access to the latest model). The Financial Regulations are informed by the JPAG “Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities” publication, known as The Practitioners’ Guide. Financial Regulations can be altered, with caution, by resolution of the council.

Current situation

The current financial regulations were reviewed and adopted by Full Council in December 2022

The Financial Regulations have now been reviewed in detail by the Clerk and the amendments suggested below are made to update known sections that have been altered by the NALC model regulations, to replace mention of Assistant Clerk with Clerk/RFO and to change mentions of Chairman to Chair.

Financial Regulation Ref	Current Wording	Proposed wording	Reason for change
Section 1 1.1		Remove footnote	No longer appears in NALC model
Section 1 1.6	A breach of these regulations by an employee is gross misconduct	Deliberate or wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.	Change in NALC Model
Section 1 1.10		Remove footnote	No longer appears in NALC model
Section 1 1.15		Remove reference to Wales	No longer appears in NALC model
Section 2			NO CHANGE
Section 3 3.1	..not later than the end of October	...not later than the end of November	Extension of time for those committees that meet less frequently to spend their current budget and then review and make plans for the next financial year
Section 4 4.5	..subject to a limit of £500	...subject to a limit of £1000	Last tree emergency cost £600; procurement policy allows spend up to £1000 if there is already a budget.

4.8	The Assistant Clerk	The RFO	Change in functions
Section 5 5.2 to 5.4 and 5.6	Instances where the Assistant Clerk is referenced	Change Clerk/RFO	Change in functions
5.2	The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the finance committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information	The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the finance committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment. The approved schedule of payments shall be initialled by two councillors who, at the meeting, have checked the invoices against the payment schedule.	This was agreed at the last revision of the Financial Regulations but not implemented (no idea why not!). The original reason was as follows: The original wording indicates that this is an approach which would have been used for a continuous ledger. SHPC does not currently rule off nor ask the chair of the PFGP to initial the schedule.
Section 6 6.4	If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of	A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal	Change in NALC model

	which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.	circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.	
Section 7			NO CHANGE
Section 8			NO CHANGE
Section 9			NO CHANGE
Section 10			NO CHANGE
Section 11			NO CHANGE
Section 12			NO CHANGE
Section 13			NO CHANGE
Section 14			NO CHANGE
Section 15			NO CHANGE
Section 16			NO CHANGE
Section 17			NO CHANGE
Section 18			NO CHANGE
Section 19			NO CHANGE

Action required by council – to consider the recommendations of the clerk following the review of the Financial Regulations and make a recommendation to full council.



Stockton Heath Parish Council

Expenses Policy

This policy is supplemental to, and does not in any way override, the Parish Council standing orders and/or Financial Regulations.

This policy was adopted by the full parish council at its meeting on .

This policy will be reviewed annually.

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy describes the process Stockton Heath Parish Council will follow for expense claims from councillors and employees.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to councillors and employees of Stockton Heath Parish Council.

3. The Legal Framework

3.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 applies to those parishes that pay members' allowances. Stockton Heath Parish Council makes no provision for allowances but does make provision for a Chair's allowance and reimbursement of expenses as detailed below.

3.2 Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a parish council to make a financial allowance to the Chair of the Parish Council.

3.2 The Employment Contract (paragraph 11) issued to all employees makes a commitment to the reimbursement of expenses incurred by employees whilst carrying out duties and obligations assigned to their roles.

4. Dissemination and training

4.1 The council will issue this policy to all employees as part of their induction and the policy will be included in the Employee Handbook, available on the Parish Council website.

4.2 The council will issue this policy to all its councillors as part of their induction and the policy will be included in the Councillors Handbook.

4.3 The policy will be available on the council's website.

5. Monitoring and review

5.1 A review of the policy shall be undertaken annually by the Clerk and if any amendments are necessary they will be advised by the Parish Clerk and reviewed by the full council.

6. General Statement of Policy

6.1 No person should be financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out duties and obligations directly associated with the core business of the Parish Council. Equally, no person should receive advantage from the public purse. This policy sets out the occasions on which expenses can be claimed and the procedure for making such claims.

7. The Chair's Allowance

7.1 Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides for town and parish councils to pay its Chair "for the purposes of enabling them to meet the expenses of the office such allowance as the

council think reasonable”.

7.2. A budget is set aside for the Chair each year to cover:

(a) Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to attend events to which the Chair has received an official invitation through the Council office according to the HMRC approved rates in force at the time.

(b) Small gifts, tokens of appreciation and donations to charity where this is considered to benefit the local community.

(c) Payments related to key events, such as hospitality during Walking Day.

(d) Telephone, stationery and printing.

(e) Other such expenses as the Council thinks reasonable.

7.3. If the Chair is unable to attend an event to which they have received an official invitation through the Council office, the Deputy Chair, if requested to attend as a substitute, will be reimbursed according to 7.1(a) above. The expenses will be charged against the Chair's budget.

7.4. If the Chair's allowance is paid as a lump sum then the amount will be subject to the usual tax and national insurance deductions to ensure compliance with HMRC regulations.

8. Councillors' Expenses

8.1 Councillors attending training courses or other events as the Council's representative may have their travel expenses reimbursed, provided that such expenses have been approved by the Council. Mileage for travel will be reimbursed according to the HMRC approved rates in force at the time.

8.2. The Parish Council will reimburse councillors for reasonable expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in connection with its business, provided that such expenses have been approved by the Council, following the procedure below (10).

8.3 No councillor should purchase goods or services without the approval of the Parish Council. The Clerk holds the Parish Council's debit card and wherever possible incidental purchases should be made using that method of payment.

8.4 In the event that a purchase has been made without approval, reimbursement will be at the discretion of the Parish Council.

9. Employees Expenses

9.1 Employees may claim reimbursement for travel costs incurred as a result of undertaking travel to any place other than their place of work, including to attend training courses, conferences and meetings associated with their duties.

9.2 Employees may claim accommodation and subsistence costs, with the prior approval of the Parish Council, if they are required to stay away from their usual residence and these costs are not part of the booking fee.

9.3 Employees may only claim other out of pocket expenses if they have consulted the Clerk prior to purchase and approval for such purchase has been given and it has not been possible to make the purchase using the Parish Council's debit card.

9.4 In the event that a purchase has been made without approval, reimbursement will be at the discretion of the Parish Council.

10. Procedure for claiming expenses

10.1. All expense claims must be made promptly and within 2 months of expenditure being incurred. A receipt for the purchase made must be provided and VAT invoices should be obtained where relevant.

10.2 Reimbursement will be by bank transfer and individual's bank details will need to be provided.

10.3 Payments will be listed on the payments schedule presented to the Planning, Finance and General Purposes (PFGP) committee and that committee will resolve the payment at its monthly

meeting.

10.4 On the resolution of the PFGP committee, a bank transfer will be arranged, with payment taking place within three days of the date of the PFGP meeting.



Stockton Heath Parish Council

DRAFT Investment Policy

This policy is supplemental to, and does not in any way override, the Parish Council Standing Orders and/or Financial Regulations.

This policy was adopted by the full parish council at its meeting on .

1. Introduction

1.1 Stockton Heath Parish Council acknowledges its responsibility to its community regarding the importance of prudent investment of any reserves held by the council.

1.2 This policy describes how Stockton Heath Parish Council will invest any monies unallocated to specific capital and revenue expenditure.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy relates to monies held by Stockton Heath Parish Council in its bank accounts.

2.2 The Parish Council does not currently invest any monies in stocks and shares, property or in any other investment scheme.

3. The Legal Framework

3.1 The Local Government Act 2003 s. 15 (1) (a) and its accompanying Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd edition)

3.2 The best practice found in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide.

4. Dissemination and training

4.1 This policy is available to councillors, staff and members of the public through publication on the Parish Council's website.

5. Monitoring and review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and whenever there is a change in legislation.

6. General Statement of Policy

6.1 Stockton Heath Parish Council will aim to hold an amount of money as a general reserve which represents its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances. The JPAG Practitioners' Guide (5.33) advises that the level of general reserve be set between three and twelve months Net Revenue Expenditure, with smaller councils holding twelve months and larger councils closer to three months.

6.2 The Parish Council will also hold Earmarked Reserves which are monies being set aside each year to save for capital projects or for recurring large outlays like council elections. This practice ensures that the amount of the precept does not fluctuate excessively and is a prudent way to manage expenditure of this nature.

6.3 These funds will be managed in such a way that they are firstly secure, secondly available without excessive delay and thirdly provide a modest return via interest paid.

6.4 To provide security of funds, the Parish Council will deposit with a recognised bank sums up to £85,000 to benefit from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCA).

6.4 To provide quick access to funds, the Parish Council will deposit monies in accounts which do not have more than a thirty-day notice period of withdrawal.

6.5 To provide a yield on monies deposited the Parish Council will seek to deposit monies in the best interest-bearing accounts that provide security and the relevant withdrawal period.

6.6 Any other investments will be considered using expert financial advice and no investment shall be made without the approval of the full council.

Item 67 - Report on Actions from previous meetings

Meeting	Minute Reference	Action	Update/ Outstanding action
FULL COUNCIL JUNE 2023	23/024	Contact Peel Holdings to propose a solution to the weeding of canal side on Ellesmere and Fairfield Road and to highlight the state of the wooden fencing	Peel had communicated that contracts were complex and there would be no immediate decision on the parish council's offer.
	23/032	Contact Walking Day organisers and obtain banking details for making donation	Bank details had been provided and payment made.
	23/036	Contact Lloyd and Smith to instruct work to the flagstones at the War Memorial	Waiting for the contractor to commence the work
JULY 2023	23/043.1	CCTV camera had been installed	Await updates
	23/043.3	Play Streets application had been made by resident but not grated for BH weekend as coincided with Creamfields.	Resident will seek agreement with homeowners and apply for a date in September.

Report on Correspondence received since the last update issued on 6 July 2023

Date	Subject of correspondence	Actions
	ChALC and NALC weekly bulletins	Forwarded to all
11/07	Resident asking about history of Stockton Heath Lodge School	Asked councillors and sent replies to resident
12/07	Query from Grappenhall Methodist Church about help with defibrillator costs	Sent grant application form and links to other defib. funders
18/07	Invitee to Walking Day thanking PC for lovely day	To note
21/07	Resident sharing information from WBC on resident parking scheme	To note – Judith and Peter involved as WBC councillors
24/07	Resident highlighting poor state of wooden fencing on Ellesmere Road	Sent request to Peel Ports – Peel Ports acknowledged work needed to be done but action by them still awaited/
03/08/	Resident highlighting lack of design elements on new café's sign and erection of awning	Invited to Planning Meeting on 8 August and advised on Licensing Application and ability to make a direct response
06/08/	Allotment Committee informing that the allotment site had suffered a break in	Information forwarded to Land Assets Committee
08/08	Resident highlighting that vegetative growth forces walkers into the road when walking on the canal side at Fairfield Road	Sent request to WBC and Peel Ports; asked rangers to do what they can within safety parameters, time constraints and with available tools
09/08	Reply form WBC re: request for Play Streets – event and traffic management officers are being	To note

	asked to consider these and an update will be sent	
13/08	Resident sharing concerns, photos and possible solutions to the recycling area at the Forge Car Park	Shared with Judith who sent direct correspondence to resident
14/08	Resident asking for Speed Camera (Gatso camera) to be installed on Grappenhall Road junction with Sandy Lane	Shared with WBC councillors as Gatso is a borough council gift in consultation with police
14/08	Invite from WBC to Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Briefing – Tuesday 12(2-3pm) or 19 Sept (6-7pm)	Forwarded to all
15/08	Resident informing that WBC had considered Play Streets request and could not accommodate it over a Bank Holiday Weekend	To note
15/08	Reply from DEFRA re: request to share Air Quality Monitor information – can be done online, but currently no plans to work directly with affiliate sites	To note
18/08	Resident asking for help to locate child-minder services.	Signposted to WBC Children and families webpage
22/08	Request to attend a parish council meeting from Lymm Safety Central.	To consider inviting to October meeting.
23/08	Resident offering a 16ft Christmas Tree from their garden	Replied to say we have a supplier and the tree is usually between 25 to 30 ft
23/08	Enquiry about wreath laying on Remembrance Sunday	Advised to contact St Thomas Church
31/08	Invitation from the Mayor's Office to attend Remembrance Sunday at Warrington Cenotaph	Forwarded to all.
31/08	Information from Police and Crime Commissioner on Honour Based Abuse (HBA)	Forwarded to all
31/08	Invitation to ChALC Annual meeting on 12 October 2023	Forwarded to all
04/09	Summer Newsletter from Police and Crime Commissioner	Forwarded to all
04/09	Enquiry from seller about Christmas Market stalls	Advised that there are no market stalls and a Pedlar's Licence can be obtained from the Police Station
04/09	Enquiry to approve annual Christmas Eve Carol event	Referred to Warrington Borough Council



Mrs Lara Jacob
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Email:
sba@pkf-l.com

Date:
22 August 2023

Our Ref:
CH0187

SAAA Ref:
SB08067

Stockton Heath Parish Council
Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2023

Dear Mrs Jacob

We have completed our review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Stockton Heath Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2023. Please find our external auditor report and certificate (Section 3 of the AGAR Form 3) included for your attention as an attachment to the email containing this letter along with a copy of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, on which our report is based.

The external auditor report and certificate details any matters arising from the review. The smaller authority must consider these matters and decide what, if any, action is required.

Action you are required to take at the conclusion of the review

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234) set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

- Prepare a "Notice of conclusion of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements. We attach a pro forma notice you may use for this purpose (a Word version is available on request).
- Publish the "Notice" along with the certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) before 30 September, which must include publication on the smaller authority's website. (Please note that when the statute and regulations were amended in 2014 and 2015, they did not include a requirement for the length of time for which that the "Notice" must be published. The previous statute required 14 days; but it is now up to the authority to make this decision).
- Keep copies of the AGAR available for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the published AGAR remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication.

Fee

We enclose our fee note, on page 4 of this attachment, for the limited assurance review, which is in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd which can be found at <https://saaa.co.uk/fees.html>. This fee is statutory, must be paid and is due immediately on receipt of invoice, please arrange for this to be paid **at the earliest opportunity**.

Additional charges are itemised on the fee note, where applicable. These arise where either:

- we have had to issue chaser letters and/or exercise our statutory powers due to a failure to provide an AGAR by the submission deadline; or
- it was necessary for us to undertake additional work.

Please return the remittance advice with your payment, which should be sent to: PKF Littlejohn LLP, Ref: Credit control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4HD. Please include the reference CH0187 or Stockton Heath Parish Council as a reference when paying by BACS.

Timetable for 2023/24

Next year we plan to set a submission deadline for the return of the completed AGAR Form 3 and associated documents (or Certificate of Exemption) in the usual way and this is expected to be Monday 1 July 2024. It is anticipated that the instructions will be sent out during March 2024, subject to arrangements for the 2023/24 AGARs and Certificates of Exemption being finalised by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited (SAAA). Our instructions will cover any changes about which smaller authorities need to be aware.

- The smaller authority must inform the electorate of a single period of 30 working days during which public rights may be exercised. This information **must be published at least the day before** the inspection period commences;
- The inspection period **must** include the first 10 working days of July 2024, i.e. 1 to 12 July inclusive. In practice this means that public rights may be exercised:
 - at the earliest, between Monday 3 June and Friday 12 July 2024; and
 - at the latest, between Monday 1 July and Friday 9 August 2024.

As in previous years, in order to assist you in this process we plan to include a pro forma template notice with a suggested inspection period on our website. On submitting your AGAR and associated documentation, as was the case for this year, we will need you to either confirm that the suggested dates have been adopted or inform us of the alternative dates selected.

We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners' Guide 2023 which is mandatory for the 2023/24 period. Paragraph 1.26 relates to the requirements in relation to Assertion 3 and states '*Email management - every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council and to which the council has access – this ideally would be a .gov.uk or .org.uk address or could be an address linked to the council website.*' In order to answer yes to Assertion 3 in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement the local authority should ensure that it has an email address that complies with this requirement and if it does not already it should do so urgently.

Feedback on 2022/23

Please note that if you wish to provide feedback, our satisfaction survey template can be used, which is available on our website on this page: <https://www.pkf-l.com/services/limited-assurance-regime/useful-information-and-links/>

Yours sincerely

PKF Littlejohn LLP

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Stockton Heath Parish Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

1. The audit of accounts for Stockton Heath Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 has been completed and the accounts have been published. 2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Stockton Heath Parish Council on application to: (a) _____ _____ _____ _____ (b) _____ _____ _____ 3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £_____ (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Announcement made by: (d) _____ Date of announcement: (e) _____	Notes This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years. (a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR (b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised (c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs (d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice (e) Insert the date of placing of the notice
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Mrs Lara Jacob
Stockton Heath Parish Council
Stockton Heath Library
Alexandra Road
Stockton Heath
WA4 2AN

Our ref CH0187
SAAA Ref SB08067
Invoice No. SB20230770
VAT No. GB 440 4982 50
Email: sba@pkf-l.com
Date: 22 August 2023

INVOICE

Professional services rendered in connection with the following:

Limited assurance review of Annual Governance & Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2023	£420.00
Additional charges (where applicable) as detailed on attached appendix A	£0.00
Additional fees (where applicable) as detailed by separate cover	£0.00
TOTAL NET	£420.00
VAT @ 20%	£84.00
TOTAL PAYABLE	£504.00

THIS IS A STATUTORY FEE WHICH MUST BE PAID. PAYMENT IS DUE ON RECEIPT OF INVOICE

The fees and charges are in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd which can be found at <https://saaa.co.uk/fees.html>

**For payments by cheque, please return the remittance advice with your payment to:
PKF Littlejohn LLP, Credit Control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD**

For payments by credit transfer, our bank details are:-

HSBC Bank plc
Address: 1-3 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 3AQ
Sort Code: 40-02-31
Account number: 11070797
Account Name: PKF Littlejohn LLP
Please include CH0187 or Stockton Heath Parish Council as the reference.

For account queries, contact sba@pkf-l.com

PKF Littlejohn LLP
15 Westferry Circus,
Canary Wharf, London
E14 4HD

T: +44 (0)20 7516 2200
www.pkf-l.com



Mrs Lara Jacob
Stockton Heath Parish Council
Stockton Heath Library
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WA4 2AN

Our ref CH0187

SAAA Ref SB08067

Invoice No. SB20230770

VAT No. GB 440 4982 50

Email: sba@pkf-l.com

Date: 22 August 2023

REMITTANCE ADVICE

Professional services rendered in connection with the following:

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VAT @ 20%	£84.00
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PKF Littlejohn LLP
15 Westferry Circus,
Canary Wharf, London
E14 4HD

T: +44 (0)20 7516 2200
www.pkf-l.com

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Stockton Heath Parish Council (CH0187)

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 this 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:

13/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

23/031.1

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

Chairman

Clerk

www.stocktonheathpc.org.uk

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Stockton Heath Parish Council (CH0187)

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	95,050	101,372	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	141,752	181,892	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	7,542	11,246	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	55,967	59,788	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	87,005	100,147	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	101,372	134,575	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	101,372	134,575	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	70054 61434 restated	81,527	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 PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			

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

Alan Jacob

Date

01/06/2023

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

13 06 2023

as recorded in minute reference:

23/03/22

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

Helena Dible

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Stockton Heath Parish Council – CH0187**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

17/08/2023