

Upton Scudamore Parish Council

Corporate Governance Questionnaire 2020-21

We remind clerks and members that this document serves to not only assist our assessment of the effectiveness of a Council's governance controls so that we may assign positive assurances in the AGAR IA Report, but to also act as an "aide memoire" to members when considering their responses to each item in the Governance Statement in the AGAR and help ensure compliance with best practice.

We also remind you that the document is for completion by the Council Chairman, not the Clerk / RFO

Area	Response (please provide detail below or on supplementary pages)
<p>1. Please confirm whether or not Standing Orders; Financial Regulations and a Member's Code of Conduct are in place. If so, when were they last updated and formally adopted by the Council? (If not on website, please provide an electronic copy of each).</p>	<p>Standing orders 09.06.2020 min ref 20/16 Financial Regulations 09.06.2020 min ref 20/16 Code of conduct 09.06.2020 min ref 20/15</p> <p>Currently having a new website built where they will be displayed in future.</p>
<p>2. 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 or, in the current Covid situation, when next able to.</p>	<p>Each page is initialed and the last page signed, these have been done up to 11.08.2020 with the remainder to be done in next couple of weeks, now covid restrictions have been eased.</p>
<p>3. Does the Council meet the criteria for adoption of the General Power of Competence and, if so, has it been adopted? Please confirm minute reference. 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 and formally minuted? Where detail is only set out on an agenda paper, please provide an example.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>The power under which monies spent/granted recorded in the minutes.</p>
<p>4. Does the Council comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (see AGAR front page), reporting all required documentation on its website? Please advise the www.// address of the website, if not the straightforward Council's name.</p>	<p>On website Financial Information (uptonscudamoreparishcouncil.com) Link should take you to correct page if not click on tab 'Parish Council' drop down 'Financial information parish council'</p>

<p>5. We are now required to check and certify on the AGAR IA Report that the Council has complied with legislative requirements posting a Notice of Public Rights to examine the financial records of the Council within the statutory time limits: please confirm compliance and provide a copy of the published notice. (Regulation 12 (3) of the Accounts and Audit Regs 2015 refers).</p>	<p>On website as per link on answer to Q 4.</p>
<p>6. 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. Again, please provide detail of the relevant meeting and minute reference.</p>	<p>Yes, they are, please see copy of completed action report with details of the meeting and min ref.</p>
<p>7. Where neither annual income or expenditure exceed £25,000, does, or is the Council opting to exempt itself from the “Limited Assurance review” process? If so, the Council must comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code publishing all required information on the website.</p>	<p>On website as per link on answer to Q 4.</p>
<p>8. Has the Council updated / reviewed its financial risk assessment and formally approved its re-adoption within the financial year (Governance and Accountability Manual refers)? Please provide an electronic copy.</p>	<p>Business risk management register approved 11.08.2020 min ref 20/40</p>
<p>9. Please provide a brief description of the approach taken to the preparation and approval of the Annual Budget and Precept.</p>	<p>Clerk prepares a forecast of the funds remaining at the end of current year, forecast of known expenditure for following year and any known expenditure for projects, this is sent to all members two weeks prior to meeting when budget/ setting precept is to take place.</p>
<p>10. Please provide detail of the approved precept for 2021-22, indicating whether any Support Grant is receivable in either year and the amount, including reference to the relevant approving minutes. If still received, the Support Grant should not be regarded as part of the precept in the AGAR Section 2.</p>	<p>2021/22budget & precept £3,608 approved meeting 10.11.2020 min ref 20/60 No Support grant received.</p>
<p>11. 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, as per above meetings and minutes.</p>

<p>12. When approving payments for release, do those members signing cheques, etc., check the payment detail to and sign-off / initial individual invoices? Please provide a full description of the approval process from receipt of invoice through to release of funds, on a separate sheet -this is particularly relevant in the light of Covid restrictions, so please advise the approach taken during “lockdown” periods.</p>	<p>Clerk receives invoices and checks they are in order to pay. There is a list of approved payments which can be paid between meetings, as approved at meeting 09.06.2020 minute ref 20/14. Payments are either listed on agenda for payment at meeting or if payment required prior to meeting email sent to members to advise of invoice and gain their confirmation to proceed to pay, it is then ratified at the next meeting. The invoice is signed by two bank signatories. Clerk has authority to make payments of less than £500 via online banking as approved at meeting 09.06.2020 min ref 20/10</p>
<p>13. Are <u>all individual</u> payments by direct debit, bankers’ standing order or internet (if in use), similarly examined and approved for payment by members? Please provide detail of the controls in place over such payments, where different to those for cheque payments, also bearing in mind the “lockdown” restrictions.</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<p>14. 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 (Practitioner’s Guide and model NALC Financial Regulations refer)?</p>	<p>Bank statements and excel spreadsheet of accounts are sent to all members with the agenda for prior viewing to each meeting. The chairman and clerk sign the accounts at the meeting. During Covid the chairman has signed them up to 30.10.2020, Clerk signed all.</p>
<p>15. Does the Council operate a petty cash account or hold any cash floats? If so, <u>do not forward the cash</u>, but provide a signed (by the Chairman or an appointed member) certificate confirming the value of physical cash held as at 31st March 2021.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>16. Has a recent physical examination and verification of the Councils stock of assets been undertaken with detail agreed to the Asset Register? If so, when and by whom and has the register been updated accordingly, where appropriate??</p>	<p>Asset register approved at meeting 09.06.2020 min ref 20/22 Cllr Pryor undertook physical examination of assets on 11.09.2020. Reported at meeting 10.11.2020 min ref 20/59</p>
<p>17. Do members consider formally whether these assets should be included on the Council’s insurance schedule or be regarded as “self-insured” (i.e. the Council would underwrite any loss rather than claim on the insurer)?</p>	<p>Insurance reviewed meeting 09.06.2020 min ref 20/23.</p>

18. 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 AGAR at the same value as in the previous year, except where new assets are acquired or disposed of.	Yes
19. Has the Council considered preparation of a photographic record of physical assets owned? Such a record would assist the smooth progress of any insurance claim or police investigation following either accidental or willful damage to Council property.	Yes – held electronically
20. Where total funds exceeding £100,000 are held, the Council is now (w.e.f. 1 4 2018) legally required to develop and adopt annually a formal Investment Policy /Strategy. If applicable, please provide an electronic copy of the document and detail of the approving minute.	N/a

Certified by Chairman: 

Date: 05.04.2021.....

Name in full: ...Susan Mack.....