

**OWSLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
9th APRIL 2018  
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, OWSLEBURY PARISH HALL**

**PRESENT.**

Parish Councillor John Chapman (Chairman).

Parish Councillors: Paul Bowes, Mark Egerton, Roger Page, Paul Phillips, Will Martin.

**IN ATTENDANCE.**

District Councillor Laurence Ruffell (left after item 68/18).

Assistant Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Michael Cleary.

No member of the public was present.

**56/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

County and City Councillor Rob Humby.

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Juanita Madgwick.

**57/18 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS ON AGENDA ITEMS.**

Councillors had no personal or prejudicial interests on the agenda items.

**58/18 APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

Councillors noted their acceptance of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018, and the Council **Resolved** they were a true record.

**59/18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.**

No member of the public was present.

**60/18 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT.**

District Councillor Ruffell commented on his report (Appendix 1), which had been circulated to councillors before the meeting, and responded to questions from councillors.

**61/18 OWSLEBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

The Council noted the success of the local village school in achieving excellent results in reading and mathematics, and congratulated the head teacher and her team.

Action: Owslebury Primary School	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk to congratulate school on behalf of the Council.</li> </ul>	Clerk

**62/18 AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

Councillors Page and Bowes reported on their attendance at a recent WCC meeting, with parishes in the District, on affordable housing. The ambition to provide additional affordable housing was one all councils recognised. However, the problems experienced by the Council during the recent attempt to have more affordable housing in the parish remained as formidable obstacles for the parish to achieve such a goal. Councillors commented that 'affordable' in the context of Government policy was not affordable in reality for many Owslebury residents looking to acquire new homes – rents remained far too high relative to local income levels. A councillor suggested further consideration be given to using a Community Land Trust, as had been undertaken in a local parish. This seemed to offer an alternative way forward with greater local control over building style and costs, rent or purchase prices and participation criteria. Other comments included the need to look afresh at the use of pre-fabricated homes (which could be erected quickly) and the greater use of brownfield sites throughout Winchester, even if such sites could only accommodate as little as two or three affordable homes. At the end of the discussion the Chairman asked Councillor Phillips to include the matter on the agenda for a meeting of the Southern Parishes, and to suggest the group invite District Councillor Caroline Brook (Cabinet Member for the Built Environment) to the meeting.

Action: Affordable housing	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Phillips to include on agenda for Southern Parishes;</li> <li>• District Cllr Caroline Brook to be invited to Southern Parishes (also district Cllr Ruffell);</li> <li>• Cllr Phillips to update Council in due course.</li> </ul>	Cllr Phillips

**63/18 COMMUNITIES AGAINST SPEED AND NOISE.**

The Chairman noted the Council had been invited to join a newly established group with the aim of reducing road noise and speed, mainly on the A31 and A272 roads. Councillors agreed to invite the Chairman of the group to address the Council at its June or July meeting.

Action: Communities against Noise and Speed	By Whom:
• Clerk to invite Chairman to the June or July Council meeting.	Clerk

**64/18 HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS.**

The Chairman noted a proposal had been put forward by the chairman of HALC to improve the working relationship between WCC and the parishes, based on similar arrangements in operation in another district. Councillors agreed to consider the matter at a future meeting.

Action: HALC	By Whom:
• Clerk to bring forward to a future meeting proposed charter' between WCC and parishes.	Clerk

**65/18 PROTECT OUR VILLAGE.**

The Assistant Clerk noted the fundraising, under Section 139 LGA 1972, to support the work of the Action against Destructive Development (ADD) group of local councils, MPs and other interested parties, had raised £8,250 to date, and further fundraising activities were planned over the next few months. The monies would be handed over to ADD as and when the Council considered it appropriate. The Assistant Clerk also noted the survey of residents' opinion (via the Owslebury Newsletter and the Owslebury Information Service) had elicited 55 responses. The residents who responded were overwhelmingly in favour of the Council providing support to ADD, with just one person registering an objection.

The Chairman noted relatively few people had participated so far in the fundraising. He updated the Council on the plans he had in mind to instil greater awareness amongst residents of the threats to the parish arising from the Eastleigh proposals. Councillors expressed their support for the proposed way forward.

**66/18 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS.**

The Clerk noted the closing date for nominations had passed. He had received notice the candidature of the seven candidates who had put their names forward was uncontested. Accordingly they were deemed to have been elected as parish councillors for the next four years. The new Council would meet on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

**67/18 POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORTS.**

There was no report from the Police. The Clerk noted the Police UK website included one case of anti-social behaviour in Pitcot Lane in February (latest information available).

**68/18 PLANNING**

a) **Planning applications.**

WCC 17/03035/FUL	Little Ranch, Portsmouth Road, Fishers Pond
Proposal:	Resubmission. The use of land for stationing of caravans for residential purposes and erection of utility/dayroom
Deadline for comments	11/04/18

The Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to opposes the application. It was unclear whether the static caravan currently on the site was for the use of Travellers or for permanent residential accommodation of people who may not in reality be Travellers. The Council considers WCC had already satisfied the need for Traveller accommodation as set out in the final draft of the WCC Travellers policy. Accordingly there was no need for an additional pitch on this site. The site is on the borders of the National Park and developments on such sites should be restricted to that which is absolutely necessary. Furthermore the proposal was unclear. The application refers to the 'stationing of caravans'. However the documentation refers to one 'touring caravan'. The Council strongly opposed the application for any additional pitches, but in any event any further permitted growth at this site should be strictly restricted to one touring caravan for genuine Travellers. The Council noted that should the Planning Officer be minded to approve the application, the matter should be referred to the Planning Committee.

SDNP/18/01115/CND	Belmore Hill Court Belmore Lane
Proposal:	Variation of condition 2 of old planning consent W02293/9
Deadline for comments	11/04/18

The Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to object to the proposed variation of condition 2 in the planning consent W02293/9. The conditions were tightly drawn for good reason. The property is also now in the National Park and as such the area needs to be protected from further development. Councillors expressed concern that by varying the conditions to allow offices, the current or a subsequent owner may seek to take advantage of planning regulations in the future and convert 'redundant' offices to residential homes. The Council noted that should the Planning Officer be minded to approve the application, the matter should be referred to the Planning Committee.

**Matterley Estate.**

Councillors noted the concerns raised by other parishes in relation to recent planning applications and, in particular, the fear the Estate may develop into a theme park. Councillors agreed to monitor future developments.

**Baybridge Park (SDNP18/00983/FUL).**

The Council considered the comments of the Planning Officer in response to its submission on the planning application (Minute 46/18). The Council noted the proposed landscaping arrangements were the same as that previously discussed and agreed with the Council in relation to two earlier applications. The proposed landscaping provided the protection the Council was seeking. Accordingly, the Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to withdraw its previous request for a landscaping review and for the matter to be referred to the Planning Committee. In addition, councillors commented on the need for the conditions of approval to include restrictions on lighting in accordance with SDNP's 'Dark skies' policy.

**b) Planning decisions.**

The Assistant Clerk noted he been informed of the following planning decision by SDNP:

SDNP/18/00566/FUL	Building 4 The Grainstore Thompsons Lane
Proposal	The removal of two existing old storage buildings and their replacement with a single modern compliant grain store
Outcome	Approved

**c) Enforcement matters.**

The Assistant Clerk noted he had not received any further updates from Enforcement since the last meeting of the Council.

**d) Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) local plan.**

The Chairman noted there had been no substantial developments to report since the last meeting of the Council.

**69/18 HIGHWAYS.**

**a) Whaddon Lane.**

The Assistant Clerk noted he had received a number of complaints about the state of Whaddon Lane. Councillors commented the lane is in an awful condition, notably in the area by the ditch near to Lower Baybridge Lane. The Chairman noted the state of the lane as well as the work necessary on the ditch (to avoid the continual flooding of the road) should again be brought to the urgent attention of Hampshire Highways and County Councillor Rob Humby.

Action: Whaddon Lane.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk to make urgent enquiries of Hampshire Highways re improvements to the lane and timing of repairs to the ditch;</li> <li>• Clerk/Chairman to bring the matter to the attention of County Cllr Humby.</li> </ul>	Clerk/ Chairman

**b) Traffic Advisory Group (TAG).**

Councillor Martin updated the Council on the first meeting of the TAG and in particular its preparations for the forthcoming site visit by the consultants, Hamilton-Baillie. The Council **Resolved** unanimously to accept Councillor Martin's proposed terms of reference for the Advisory Group: The TAG would seek to make recommendations to Council

- i. to help better manage the volume of traffic in the village;
- ii. to help reduce the speed of traffic; and
- iii. to help improve safety of residents and car drivers.

The Council also accepted Councillor Martin's recommendation that the membership of the group for the time being would comprise Councillors Martin (Chair), Egerton and Chapman, David Greenslade and Andrew Hodges.

c) **Valued trees.**

Councillors noted the importance of protecting the landscape and asked the matter be brought forward to an early meeting of the new Council.

Action: Valued trees	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to bring matter forward to an early meeting of the new council.</li> </ul>	Clerk

d) **Lengthsman contract 2018/19.**

The Council noted the lead council for the Lengthsman scheme for 2018/19 would be Otterbourne. The Assistant Clerk advised the Council the usual contract (circulated to councillors before the meeting) between the lead council and the participating councils would need to be signed in order for the Council to remain in the Scheme. The Council **Resolved** unanimously to authorise the Clerk to enter into such a contract. The Council noted a balance of £240 remained on the Lengthsman ring-fenced reserve for the 2017/18 scheme (in which year Owslebury was the lead council) and **Resolved** unanimously to transfer such sum to Otterbourne parish council for use in the 2018/19 Scheme.

Action: Lengthsman Scheme	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to sign participating council agreement with Otterbourne parish council;</li> <li>Assistant RFO to arrange for transfer of £240 from ring-fenced reserve to Otterbourne Lengthsman Scheme</li> </ul>	Clerk
	Clerk

e) **HGV Signage.**

Councillors noted the need for clearer signage at the main entrance points to the village prohibiting HGVs (other than those delivering to sites in the village).

Action: HGV signage.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk/Chairman to contact Hampshire Highways and/or County Councillor Rob Humby</li> </ul>	Clerk/ Chairman

**70/18 RIGHTS OF WAY.**

The Assistant Clerk noted concerns has been raised about certain rights of way and the matters were under review.

**71/18 OPEN SPACES, RECREATION AND PLAY GROUNDS.**

a) **Staggs Gate Pond.**

The Assistant Clerk noted an appropriate warning sign had been ordered at a cost of £40 plus VAT and would be erected shortly after the Chairman and Clerk/Assistant Clerk had carried out a site visit.

Action: Staggs Gate Pond	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk/Chairman to carry out site visit and warning sign to be installed.</li> </ul>	Clerk/ Chairman

b) **Playground access.**

The Assistant Clerk noted the improvements to the access had been completed - a ramp had been constructed and a hook provided to hold the gate open for those with mobility difficulties.

**72/18 FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND STATUTORY.**

a) **Payments and receipts.**

The Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to approve the following payments and authorised any two of the four approved signatories (Councillors Chapman, Phillips, Bowes and Martin) to authorise electronic payments as necessary.

Voucher	Amount (£)	Payee	Purpose	
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
100*	331.99	M Cleary	Net pay March	Electronic
101*	221.20	HMRC	March PAYE	Electronic
102*	76.06	M Cleary March exps	Broadband and telephone 1/4ly allowance £30.95, homeworking 1/4ly allowance	Electronic

			£31.25, stationary £11.55, VAT £2.31	
103*	540.00	Darren Hitchens	Improvements to access at playground entrance (Minute 19/18) includes £90 VAT	Electronic
104*	20.00	John Chapman	Chairman's quarterly allowance.	Electronic
1	65.75	OPHMC	March hall hire	Electronic
2	304.80	HALC	Subscription 2018/19 (VAT £50.80)	Electronic
3	40.00	Hampshire Playing Fields	Subscription for 2018/19	Electronic
4	240.00	Otterbourne Parish Council	Balance on ring-fenced Lengthsman reserve account (Minute 69/18(d))	Electronic

- Payments made pre 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 Minute 50/18(b) refers

Receipts

Amount (£)	Payer	Purpose	
0.03	Lloyds	Interest	Electronic
13.75	Penni Harrison	Use of play area March	Electronic
8050.00	Various donors	Donations under S139 LGA 1972 for ADD	Cheques/electronic

b) **Section 1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2017/18.**

The Council considered the assertions set out in Section 1 of the AGAR and the supporting comments provided by the Assistant Clerk (Appendix 3). The Council debated each of the assertions and agreed the Council could provide affirmative responses on the AGAR. However, it noted the internal audit review would shortly be undertaken and deferred formal approval of Section 1 until its next meetings at which time the internal auditor's report would be available.

c) **Estimated financial outcome for 2017/18.**

The Council noted the Assistant's RFO's summary of the outturn for 2017/18 and the main reasons for the variances against budget. The Council had operated well within its budget and was able to further enhance its reserves for known future expenditure notably on play equipment and on traffic management initiatives.

d) **Virement of account balances.**

The Council **Resolved** unanimously to offset surpluses against budget on individual account headings with those in deficit, as permitted under the Financial Regulations.

e) **Reserves held at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.**

The Council noted the Assistant RFO's comments on the type and level of reserves held at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The Council considered each of the ear-marked reserves and was satisfied the reserves were required for the purposes stated, and were not excessive. The Council considered the level of the General reserve and considered it was sufficient to deal with unexpected expenditure during the year.

f) **Grants under S137 LGA 1972.**

The Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to provide a grant of £100 to the Owslebury Newsletter so as to reflect its important contribution to the local community in providing Council and other information particularly to those parishioners who do not have internet access.

g) **Fixed assets at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.**

The Council noted the Assistant RFO's summary of fixed assets, including the related accounting policy, and was satisfied it reflected all the assets of the Council.

h) **Insurance arrangements for 2018/19.**

The Council noted the insurance policy would fall due on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018. The Council asked for competitive quotes to be obtained for the consideration of the new Council at its first meeting in May.

Action: Insurance	By Whom:
• Clerk to obtain competitive quotes	Clerk

i) **Purchase of printer.**

The Council **Resolved** unanimously to authorise the purchase of a new printer (preferably a laser printer) for a cost not exceeding £150 plus VAT.

j) **Bank mandate.**

The Council noted Mr Gerald Tull had been disqualified from continuing to be a councillor and accordingly **Resolved**, unanimously, to amend the bank mandate to remove him as an authorised signatory. The Council further **Resolved**, unanimously, to authorise the Assistant Clerk and RFO to access the bank account until such time as the Clerk and RFO’s application to be included as an authorised signatory had been processed by the Bank, or 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018, whichever was the earlier.

**73/18 CLERK’S REPORT.**

The Council noted the Clerk’s report (Appendix 2).

**74/18 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING.**

There were no specific matters councillors wished to include on the May agenda for the new Council other than those noted above.

**75/18 END OF COUNCIL TERM OF OFFICE.**

The Chairman noted it was the last meeting of the current Council, and thanked the councillors for their contributions over the last four years. In addition the Council **Resolved**, unanimously, to thank Gerry Tull for his undoubted advice and assistance over his near 20 years as a parish councillor.

The Chairman noted that this was probably the last meeting that Michael Cleary would attend as Clerk and RFO. He thanked Michael for all his hard work over the last seven years, saying that Michael had vastly improved the service the Parish Council provides to the community, firstly by his improvement to the website and the Information Service provided by e-mail and on Facebook. Secondly he maintained excellent communications with the Officers of both Winchester District Council and Hampshire County Council so we were able to benefit quickly when problems needed to be solved. Finally he has kept the Chairman and Parish Councillors on an even keel, ensuring we have not strayed from our duties to serve the community. We have indeed been fortunate have had Michael to guide and manage us, we wish him and his family well for the future.

**76/18 DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING.**

The Council agreed the date of the Annual Parish Assembly should be determined by the new Council at its first meeting. Councillors noted the first meeting of the new Council, the Annual Parish Council Meeting, would be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall.

The meeting closed shortly before 9.15pm.

Chairman .....John Chapman.....Date: 14/05/18

**APPENDIX 1: DISTRICT COUNCILLOR RUFFELL'S REPORT.**

**Winchester City Council continues its zero tolerance approach to fly-tipping in the District**

Winchester City Council is not letting up on its zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping in the District following the successful prosecution of two men who ignored the law.

In one of the prosecutions, 1400kg of asbestos cement roofing was dumped in a car park at Beacon Hill Nature Reserve in Warnford on or before 23 of June, 2017.

Beacon Hill is located within the South Downs National Park and is a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). The waste had come from a property which was being developed by the defendant, Jeffrey Wickens at Station Road, West Meon.

Wickens of High Street, Droxford, Bursledon pleaded guilty at Portsmouth Magistrates Court to two offences which were contrary to Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. He admitted breaching his duty of care in relation to the waste, which had been within his control and which was later found at the above location by failing to ensure that the waste had been transferred to an authorised person for disposal and by failing to provide a written description of the waste.

District Judge Callaway, sentencing Wickens of High Street, Droxford, found that his actions had been reckless and ordered him to pay a fine of £4000 in addition to prosecution costs of £1863 and £170 Victim Surcharge.

**In another case**, which was also heard at Portsmouth Magistrates Court, Winchester City Council successfully prosecuted Anthony Cross of The Acorns, Bursledon who pleaded guilty to a fly-tipping offence which was contrary to Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The court heard how a quantity of paint cans, wood, metal, plastic sheeting, packaging and gardening waste had been deposited at Wheely Down Lane, Warnford in the South Downs National Park on or before 18 July 2016. The waste entirely blocked the lane, preventing access by traffic.

Cross pleaded guilty to the offence on the basis that he allowed his vehicle to be used to deposit the waste. Cross was sentenced by District Judge Callaway to a 12 month Community Order and was ordered to pay £300 towards prosecution costs and an £85 Victim Surcharge.

**“City Council announces purchase of Coventry House, Barfield Close**

Winchester City Council has announced a decision to purchase Coventry House, Barfield Close from Vaultex UK Ltd. The acquisition of this property will enable the **Council to expand the Park & Ride parking scheme** in the City to support our aim to improve the quality of the District's environment by reducing congestion and improving air quality. The site is convenient to visitors as it is both close to the Motorway, and near enough to the city centre to encourage users to walk to their destination.

Vaultex also confirmed the sale and added that the company was delighted to be able to support the Council's aim to create a new edge of town parking facility.

**Winchester City Council is supporting residents taking their first steps on the housing ladder through myhome -the Partnered Home Purchase Scheme launched this month.**

The pilot-scheme offers residents the chance to choose an open-market home which the Council buys. Those participating lease a 50 to 70 percent share back from the Council and pay the authority a rent on the part they don't own. Interested applicants who meet the eligibility criteria can make an online application to Winchester City Council. If their application is successful, they will be accepted onto the scheme subject to a satisfactory financial assessment with an independent financial advisor.

The Council purchases the buyer's chosen property outright, and leases a share (between 50%-70%) to the home buyer through a 125 year shared ownership lease. The home buyer will obtain a mortgage for their share of the property, and pay a monthly rent to the Council on the remaining share.

Minutes of the Owslebury Parish Council Meeting Held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018

There are conditions that anyone who applies must meet: anyone applying cannot already own a property; the chosen home should be within the Winchester District; have one or more bedroom and be worth up to £450,000. The home should also be acceptable for mortgage purposes.

The scheme will first be piloted to a limited number of households. Applications for myhome will be assessed through a points system. Places on the scheme will be given to the eligible applicants who score the highest number of points - subject to satisfactory financial assessment with an independent financial adviser. Residents of the District, first time buyers, those who work in the District, and key workers will all achieve points towards the scheme criteria.

To register for myhome call 01962 848 075. Further information regarding the terms and conditions is available on [www.winchester.gov.uk/myhome](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/myhome)

Cllr Laurence Ruffell

**APPENDIX 2: CLERK'S REPORT ON ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON AGENDA.**

Action: DBC check	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to arrange for contractor to undertake DBS check and Council to pay costs involved.</li> </ul>	Clerk

**In hand – for next season**

Action: Parish Hall Advisory Committee.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to set-up and prepared preliminary list of issues</li> </ul>	Clerk

**OPHMC to consider revisions to current constitution. Cttee 'on hold'**

Action: Whaddon Lane ditch.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to discuss with HH removal of mud.</li> <li>Clerk to make enquires of Marwell Wildlife re ownership of ditch</li> </ul>	Clerk

**Overtaken by Hampshire Highways. Major capital work included in 2018/19 budget to improve drainage.**

Action: Local transport services.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to consider other transport options.</li> </ul>	Clerk

**Awaiting outcome of HCC review**

Action: Positioning of signs.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to discuss with HH positioning of signs at Longwood Road junction and Portsmouth/Hurst Lane.</li> </ul>	Clerk

**Will include on agenda for next face to face meeting.**

Action: Hilly Close residents parking.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Councillor Ruffell to provide name of WCC officer for further discussion</li> </ul>	District Cllr Ruffell

**Awaiting information from District Councillor Ruffell.**

Action: HGV signage	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillors/Clerk to consider need/cost re better signage to local businesses.</li> </ul>	Clerk

**Outstanding**

Action: Valued trees	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to issue OIS notice.</li> <li>Clerk to investigate TPOs for groups of trees on specific sites.</li> <li>Chairman to consider advisory group membership.</li> </ul>	Clerk Clerk Chairman

**On agenda for meeting**

Action: Red Lane	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairman and Clerk to investigate likelihood of HCC grant</li> <li>Clerk to investigate 'clear-up' order re adjoining piece of land</li> <li>Clerk to investigate ownership re neighbouring piece of land.</li> </ul>	Chairman / Clerk

**In-hand.**

Action: Playground.	By Whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to update planned programme of work</li> </ul>	Clerk

**In-hand for May or June meeting.**

**APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR SECTION 1 AGAR 2017/8**

**Owslebury Parish Council**

**Supporting information for Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2017/18**

**Assertion 1: We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year and for the preparation of the accounting statements.**

**Evidence:**

The Council has followed the recommendations set out in Governance and Accountability for Local Councils 2018, in particular:

- a) the budget for 2017/18 was discussed and approved by the Council in November 2016 (Minute 178/16(C)) and December 2016 (Minute 192/16(C)) and the 2017/18 precept set accordingly. The budgeting process took account of actual expenditure in the previous year and also the Council's plans for 2017/18. The budget was drawn up on a prudent or worst case basis and the Council was confident it could manage within the level of precept and its reserves. Cash outlays were monitored throughout the year against the budget. Reports were provided by the RFO on a quarterly basis;
- b) the RFO maintains up-to-date accounting records recording all transactions. The accounting records comprise a cash book, bank statements, invoice file, fixed assets register and supporting legal documents where relevant;
- c) the RFO reconciles the bank accounts on a monthly basis including at the year-end, which reconciliation is reviewed by the Chairman;
- d) the Council reviews its reserves regularly and places money, as appropriate, on short-term deposit with Lloyds bank. The Council ensures it has ready access to its reserves for ring-fenced and ear-marked purposes for projects which are likely to require funding within the fiscal year;
- e) the RFO's cash book spreadsheets incorporate links to a 'Receipts and Payments' model which ensures the Council can produce a Receipts and Payments record for any period throughout the fiscal year, together with details of fixed assets, and can prepare Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**\*Assertion 2: We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.**

**Evidence:**

The Council's internal control includes the following:

- a) the Council reviews and updates as necessary, but usually annually, its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
- b) the Risk register is considered by the Council on an annual basis;
- c) a fixed assets register is maintained by the RFO and reviewed by the Council. The assets are inspected at least once per year and insurance cover maintained for all significant assets;
- d) the Council does not hold petty cash or provide credit cards. All expenditure on the Council's behalf incurred by the Clerk/RFO needs to be approved by the Council before it is reimbursed by bank transfer or cheque;
- e) all cheque and electronic banking requires the authority of at least two councillors before the bank will process the transaction;
- f) all changes to the bank mandate require the approval of the Council;
- g) salary payments to the Clerk/RFO are in accord with the contract of employment and any change to pay rates are approved by the Council;
- h) PAYE (no NI contributions or pension contributions being required for the Clerk) is paid monthly under the RIT procedure;
- i) where VAT is suffered by the Council the RFO submits a claim under the special arrangements for local authorities (VAT126) on a regular basis.

**Assertion 3: We took all reasonable steps to ensure 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.**

**Evidence:**

The Council seeks to ensure its activities are lawful. The Clerk advises the Council on statutory requirements and where there is doubt, the Clerk researches Arnold Baker or consults with others including:

- a) the internal auditor;
- b) Hampshire Association of Local Councils – HALC - (with access to legal help where necessary);
- c) fellow Clerks.

Councillors and the Clerk receive regular updates from HALC including proposed or actual changes in legislation and determine the impact on the Council.

**Assertion 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.**

**Evidence:**

The Council undertook the following:

- a) published Section 1 and 2 of the AGAR on the statutory notice board and website clearly noting the status was 'unaudited';
- b) published the rights of electors and ensured the accounting records were available for review by electors if they so wished;
- c) published the external auditors report on the website and on the statutory notice board;
- d) published its Transparency report on the website.

**Assertion 5: We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.**

**Evidence:**

The Council carries out an annual assessment of the main risks it faces and the related consequences should the risks materialise. It records these risks in a Risk Assessment and identifies ways of mitigating the risks. In relation to its main risk – the playground and the risk of injury to children – the Council seeks two independent assessments a year (as well as its own regular inspections) so as to identify any new risks and to determine when remedial action should be taken

**\*Assertion 6: We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.**

**Evidence:**

The Council appointed John Murray as its Internal Auditor. It noted John is a Chartered Public Finance Accountant, has extensive experience including as internal auditor for other councils, and has no connections with the Clerk/RFO or the Councillors. The Clerk/RFO provides John with all the accounting records and minutes and responds to any questions raised by him. The Internal Auditors letter is reviewed by the Council and published on its website.

**Assertion 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 smaller authority and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.**

**Evidence:**

The Council considered the business it had undertaken in the year. It noted its accounts are on a receipts and payments basis. The Council did not consider there was any material post balance sheet event which should be brought to the attention of electors or of the auditor (internal and external).