

Nuneham Courtenay 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.</p> <p>If so, when were they last updated and formally adopted by the Council?</p> <p style="color: red;">(If not on website, please provide an electronic copy of each).</p>	<p>All three are in place and were last updated/re-adopted at the 2019 Annual Council Meeting: see minutes ref. 19/9, 19/10 and 19/11.</p> <p>The Government waived the requirement for an Annual Council Meeting to be held in 2020 and none took place.</p> <p>The Financial Regulations are attached.</p>
<p>2. Where original minutes are not provided for our examination, please confirm that each page of the master copy is signed or initialled by the Chairman at the subsequent meeting or, in the current Covid situation, when next able to.</p>	<p>Yes, they are and copies of all signed minutes can be found on the website except for the March 2021 minutes which are not due to be approved until the meeting on 4th May.</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.</p> <p>If reliance is still placed on S.137, etc, when considering the approval of grants and donations</p>	<p>No, the Council does not meet both criteria: although four members were elected in 2019, the Clerk does not hold the relevant qualification (CiLCA).</p> <p>The Council made only one payment in 2020-21 that relied on section 137 of the Local</p>

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<p>to local (and other) bodies, are the relevant powers considered and formally minuted?</p> <p>Where detail is only set out on an agenda paper, please provide an example.</p>	<p>Government Act 1972.</p> <p>The relevant power was considered, as can be seen from minute ref 19/241.</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?</p> <p>Please advise the www.// address of the website, if not the straightforward Council's name.</p>	<p>The Council seeks to comply with the Transparency Code and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The address of the Council's website is:</p> <p>http://nunehamcourtenay.org.uk/</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>Yes, the Council posted a Notice on its website and its noticeboard.</p> <p>The notice can still be viewed on the Council's website here:</p> <p>http://nunehamcourtenay.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Exercise-of-public-rights-2020.pdf</p>

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<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>The internal audit report for 2019-20 was presented to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council in August 2020 and the Council considered all four of the recommendations (minute ref 19/157).</p> <p>The Council certified itself as exempt from External Audit (minute ref 19/38).</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?</p> <p>If so, the Council must comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code publishing all required information on the website.</p>	<p>I expect the Council will vote to exempt itself, as it did in 2019 and 2020</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>The Council did not review its financial risk assessment during 2020-21</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>The Council approved a budget for 2020-21 in January 2020, based on a draft prepared by the Clerk as RFO and preceded by an examination of a monitoring report for 2019-20 – this time showing the precept as a balancing figure (minute ref 19/103).</p> <p>A brief explanation was given in a Newsletter article distributed to all</p>

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	<p>parishioners.</p> <p>The Council approved a budget for 2021-22 in January 2021, based on a draft prepared by the Clerk as RFO and preceded by an examination of a monitoring report for 2020-21.</p> <p>Before the Clerk drew up the budget a councillor had circulated an email calling for there to be no increase in the parish council element of the Council Tax and the budget was drawn up on that basis.</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>The precept for 2020-21 was £6,072 whereas the precept for 2021-22 is £6,408 which represented no change in the parish council element of the Council Tax because there had been an increase in the Council Tax base.</p> <p>No Support Grant was receivable in either year.</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>The level of unrestricted reserves is clearly shown when the budget is approved but a decision is not formally minuted.</p>

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<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>Yes. Any payment is normally presented to a Council meeting and, if approved, two signatories check and initial the supporting paperwork and (in the case of cheques) the stub before signing the payment.</p> <p>There is a separate procedure for salaries which enables the Chair and Vice-Chair to make quarterly payments when due even if there is no convenient Council meeting. Such payments are then approved at the next Council meeting: see, for example, minute ref 19/146d.</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>The Council does not currently have any standing orders, nor does it use internet banking.</p> <p>No new direct debit arrangements were entered into in 2020-21.</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>No. The Council received bank reconciliations at its September, November, January and March ordinary meetings but the Covid-19 situation meant a face-to-face meeting between the Clerk and a member of the Council to verify the detail would have been considered completely inappropriate.</p>

Area	Response (please provide detail below or on supplementary pages)
15. Does the Council operate a petty cash account or hold any cash floats?	No
16. Has a recent physical examination and verification of the Council's 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??	The nature of the Council's assets is such that the Clerk sees almost all of those that are not kept in his own home every time he visits the village
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)?	No
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.	<p>Apart from the noticeboard, assets are valued at purchase cost net of VAT.</p> <p>The Council was not asked to pay for the new noticeboard and the Asset Register only records the cost of a sign saying "Nuneham Courtenay Parish" which the Council ordered separately from Restore.</p>

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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 wilful damage to Council property.	No, but it would be simple to undertake
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.	Not applicable

Certified by Chair:

Madhvi Saini

Date:

Tuesday 11th May 2021

Name in full:

Madhvi Saini