

South Hinksey Parish Council

Corporate Governance Questionnaire: *for completion by the Council Chairman, not the Clerk/RFO*

Area	Response (please provide detail below or on supplementary pages)
<p>Please confirm whether or not Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place.</p> <p>If so, when were they last updated and formally adopted by the Council?</p> <p>(Please provide an electronic copy of both.</p>	<p>Both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place.</p> <p>They were last updated and formally adopted by the Council at the March 2017 meeting.</p>
<p>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 when they are approved.</p>	<p>The original minutes have been provided except for the first page of the December 2016 minutes which are a photocopy as the front page of the original minutes had an accident!</p>
<p>Please provide detail of the approved precept and any Support Grant for 2016-17 and 2017-18, including a copy of the relevant approving minute.</p>	<p>The Council approved a precept of £8,500 for 2017-18, an increase of £750 on the precept for 2016-17, and the relevant approving minute is included in the minutes of the January 2017 meeting.</p>
<p>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 and date.</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Where detail of powers relied on is only set out on an agenda paper, please provide an example.</p>	<p>The Council does not meet the criteria for adoption of the General Power of Competence.</p> <p>The relevant powers are formally minuted for every payment by the Council, including Section 137 when used.</p>

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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>Both the internal and external audit reports were presented to and agreed by the Council.</p> <p>The report of the Internal Auditor was presented to the Council's July 2016 meeting and the report of the External Auditor was presented to the Council's November 2016 meeting.</p>
Has the Council reviewed an updated version of the financial risk assessment and formally approved its re-adoption (Governance and Accountability Manual – 2014 refers)?	The Council last reviewed the financial risk assessment at its December 2016 meeting.
When approving payments for release, do those members signing cheques examine and sign / initial individual invoices. Please provide a brief description of the approval process from receipt of invoice through to release of funds, on a separate sheet.	The two members signing cheques examine individual invoices before signing the cheques and initialling the cheque stubs.
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.	The Council's Financial Regulations in force throughout 2016-17 only permitted payment by cheque, approved by the Council at each Council meeting and signed by two members.
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 (Governance and Accountability manual refers)?	<p>The Council decided at its March 2017 to appoint a member to review the end of year bank reconciliation and verify detail to underlying cashbooks and bank statements.</p> <p>The new Financial Regulations approved at the March 2017 meeting include a requirement for a member to verify bank reconciliations produced by the Clerk for all bank accounts.</p>

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<p>Please provide a brief description of the approach taken to the preparation and approval of the Annual Budget and Precept.</p>	<p>The Council appointed two members at its November 2016 to meet with the Clerk to prepare the draft 2017-18 annual budget.</p> <p>They met on 25th November and their recommendations were presented to the December 2016 meeting.</p> <p>Prior to considering the 2017-18 budget, the sub-committee conducted a review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Risk Assessment • The Clerk's salary and hours • The Council's Asset Register. <p>The Council at its December 2016 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the amended Risk Assessment • Confirmed the Clerk's grade and hours. <p>The Council set the precept for 2017-18 at its January 2017 meeting.</p>
<p>Does the Council formally consider and approve the level of reserves (General and Earmarked Funds) to be carried forward to the next financial year?</p> <p>(Such consideration should be minuted formally).</p>	<p>The Council formally considers the level of reserves when approving the precept for the following year, with advice from the Clerk regarding recommended levels.</p> <p>The Council decided at its December 2016 meeting that the Clerk should add the level of reserves to the format of the financial reports it receives.</p>
<p>Has a physical examination / verification of the Council's stock of assets been undertaken recently? If so, when and by whom?</p>	<p>A review of the Council's Asset Register was undertaken in November 2016 but no physical examination has been undertaken recently, apart from the monthly checks undertaken by the Clerk on the Automated External Defibrillator.</p> <p>Following a meeting with me in March 2017, the Clerk has begun compiling a photographic record of all the Council's assets and it is intended he will check them and photograph them annually in future years.</p> <p>This will help members to understand the</p>

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	<p>condition of the assets better.</p> <p>The Council's principal assets are in public places where their condition is regularly monitored: street lights in the village; and fencing and furniture in the burial ground.</p> <p>Other, smaller items, such as the Chairman's pendant, are generally held by an individual responsible for their safekeeping.</p>
Do members consider formally whether these assets should be included on the Council's insurance schedule or be regarded as "self-insured"?	Members do not formally consider whether individual items should be included on the insurance schedule.
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 Annual Return at the same value as the previous year, except where new assets are acquired or disposed of.	<p>Asset values are based on purchase cost net of VAT where known.</p> <p>Where the purchase cost is unknown, asset values are reported on the Annual Return at the same value as the previous year.</p>
Does the Council act as Sole or Custodial trustees of any charitable funds? If so, are the transactions excluded from the Annual Return financial detail at Section 2?	The Council does not act as Sole or Custodial trustees of any charitable funds.

Certified by Chairman: Mike Cochrane

Date: Friday 31st March 2017

Name in full: MICHAEL CHARLES NICHOLAS COCHRANE