

SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Our Ref: JM

17 March 2021

To: **All Members of the Parish Council**

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on **Wednesday 24 March 2021 commencing 7.00 p.m.** at which the business set out below will be transacted. Councillors and members of the public can join the meeting by using Zoom.

Yours sincerely

*Jayne Minor*

**Jayne Minor (Ms)**  
**Parish Clerk**

<b>AGENDA</b>
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**PUBLIC FORUM**

A maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated prior to the commencement of the meeting when members of the public may put questions/comments on any matter in relation to which the Parish Council has powers or duties which affect the area (see notes at the end of the Agenda).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION**

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on the Agenda in accordance with the Parish Town Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007.

**3. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 27 January 2021 [Minute Nos. 48-58] [**ENCLOSURE**].

**4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**5. THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANS**

Members are requested to debate the up-to-date position relating to the High-Speed Rail Plans.

**6. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

Members are requested to receive and note the attached report [ENCLOSURE].

**7. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

Members are requested to receive and note the attached report [ENCLOSURE].

**8. STAFFORDSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS' ASSOCIATION (SPCA)**

Members are requested to consider renewal of membership of the SPCA at a cost of £130 per annum.

The Association was founded in 1939 and:

- Saves you time and money by streamlining your Council's "business" using model documents.
- Provides legal/financial advice.
- Provides free quarterly newsletters to all Clerks/Councillors to keep Councils in touch with the latest developments.
- Suggests sources of funding for projects and provides guidance and advice on public sector borrowing approval
- Provides access to a database of suppliers who provide products and services for Councils, website design, Council notice boards, playground equipment, shelters, bins etc.

**9. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman will move:

That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

**10. PARISH CLERK'S SALARY**

Members are requested to approve the payment of the Parish Clerk's February 2021 and March 2021 salary (**PINK ENCLOSURE**).

**11. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 May 2021.

**PUBLIC FORUM SESSION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**Residents of Swinfen and Packington Parish Council have an opportunity to speak at each Parish Council meeting:**

1. *The Public Forum session will usually be the first item on the Agenda.*
2. *The Public Forum will last up to 15 minutes and members of the public can ask the Parish Council a question (or make a statement).*
3. *Your statement or question must relate to a matter of special relevance to Swinfen and Packington or within the responsibility of the Parish Council.*
4. *Matters relating to the conduct of any individual councillor or officer will not be permitted – in such circumstances you should write to the Parish Council.*
5. *You will be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes and you can raise more than one issue within the overall limit of 3 minutes allowed to you.*
6. *After each speaker the Chairman of the Parish Council (or his/her representative) will answer the question or give notice that he/she will provide a written answer as soon as possible.*

*If a written answer is to be given this will be sent to you at your stated address.*

**MINUTES OF THE SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021 COMMENCING AT 7.03 PM**

**PRESENT**

Councillor Barnes in the Chair  
Councillors Dyott and Mrs Pope

**In attendance:**

Ms J Minor, Parish Clerk  
Ms M Phillips

**48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Armstrong.

**49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**50. MINUTES**

The Parish Clerk made reference to Minute No. 37 - Chairman's Announcements and in particular the Packington Sign and confirmed that the works had been completed.

**RESOLVED** That a cheque be drawn [cheque number 100579] in the sum of £100 in respect of the removal and resiting of the Packington sign [Bishops Landscapes].

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 25 November 2020 [Minute Nos. 34-47] as circulated, be approved as a correct record.

**51. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Packington Hall**

Councillor Barnes informed Members that the building company have ceased trading and that some of the building works had to be demolished as they did not comply with building regulations. Thus, will ultimately delay the completion of the development.

**Planning Application 21/00038/ABN - Common Barn Farm, Tamworth Road [Agricultural Determination: Erection of general purpose agricultural building]**

The Parish Clerk informed Members that the Planning Officer, Helen Sherratt, did not believe that this type of application is able to be

determined retrospectively however for ABN applications it is not a statutory requirement for Parish Councils to be consulted.

Councillor Loescher's email had stated "ABN should only be used for an agricultural building and is defined as follows:

"Development giving rise to buildings, structures or works not designed for agricultural purposes is not permitted. The courts have held that this condition relates to the physical appearance and layout of a building, not its function."

Councillor Barnes confirmed that the building was 25 ft high in the centre and 5 roller entrances and clearly not right as they had started work without planning permission.

The Parish Council have submitted the following to Lichfield District Council:

"Whilst we are advisory as a Parish Council, we believe the site is wrong and reasoning for its requirement is contentious too and would OBJECT STRONGLY against this development as applied for.

Reasons I believe are as follows:

1. They have had pigs on this farm for years and indeed have two more sites with buildings already on. So why this one suddenly now? Why not build another alongside?
2. Its massive on the size asked for currently and the specification looks distinctly like an industrial development. Its over 25 ft high in the centre and all insulated. Farm building for pigs would not require that at any stretch of the imagination. It looks like a 5-bay industrial unit block.
3. The access shown is also strange and reinforces the thought pattern of the owners that increasing the industrial site, as the road way shown goes directly passed an existing farm building site, they have built so why go to the new area proposed. You don't have to be a brain surgeon to see that the existing industrial site has also access to this development. But not shown on the application.
4. This building will be seen and clearly visible from the A 51 whereas on their other site 400 yards away it will not.
5. It is also as strange that diggers etc have already started work on this proposed site this week."

## **52. THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANS**

Councillor Barnes informed Members that Jerry's Lane was closed again.

## **53. REPLACEMENT OF NOTICE BOARD AT JERRY'S LANE**

**RESOLVED** That a notice board be ordered from Noticeboards Online Limited [quotation reference 3315] in the sum of £1741.00 plus VAT. That the powder coated premium grade aluminium frame be in green.

**54. REFURBISHMENT OF EXISTING BUS SHELTER OPPOSITE JERRY'S LANE**

**RESOLVED** That as the company who manufactures this particular style of shelter [the SA series] have ceased trading and you can no longer purchase the glass without paying for a pattern and ordering a minimum run order of 50 no. panels it was decided not to proceed with the refurbishment of the existing bus shelter.

**55. REMOVAL AND INSTALLATION OF NEW BUS SHELTER OPPOSITE JERRY'S LANE**

**RESOLVED** That a new bus shelter be ordered [quotation number 2370] in the sum of £4090.00 plus VAT.

**56. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as expended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

**57. PARISH CLERK'S SALARY**

**RESOLVED** That cheques be drawn in respect of the Parish Clerk's December 2020 [cheque number 100568] and January 2021 [cheque number 100571] salary, HMRC - December 2020 [cheque number 100569], Staffordshire Pension Fund - December 2020 [cheque number 100570], HMRC - January 2021 [cheque number 100572] and Staffordshire Pension Fund - January 2021 [cheque number 100573].

**58. DATE, VENUE AND TIME FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**RESOLVED** That:  
Wednesday 24 March 2021  
Wednesday 19 May 2021

in the Conference Room 1, Conference Centre, HMP Swinfen commencing 7.00 p.m. be confirmed as the next Parish Council meetings.

(The Meeting closed at 7:17 pm)

Signed .....

Dated .....

## SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

#### 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 imposes a duty on local councils to “maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control”.
- 1.2 Internal audit is a key component of the system of internal control. The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a council’s activities and operating procedures are effective.
- 1.3 Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of effectiveness of internal audit. The council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.

#### 2. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

- 2.1 The following criteria must be satisfied for internal audit to be considered effective:
- That the Internal Auditor is independent of the other financial controls and procedures of the Council which are subject to review.
  - That they are competent to carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs of the Council.
  - That consideration is made of how many times in a year the systems and records should be subject to internal audit.
  - That the scope of the internal audit is sufficient.
  - That any internal audit report is considered in full by a meeting of the Parish Council.
  - That appropriate action is taken on any recommendations contained in the internal audit report.
  - The Council must also satisfy itself that the quality of delivery of the internal audit service provides reliable assurance about the Council’s internal controls and its management of risk.

- 2.2 Considering these requirements for internal audit for Swinfen and Packington Parish Council:

##### 2.3.1 Independence

The Internal Auditor has no involvement in the Parish Council’s financial controls, procedures or decision making. They are not related to, nor associated with, any member of the Parish Council or the Parish Clerk. The Internal Auditor has direct access to the Parish Council should they think this necessary.

### 2.3.2 Competence

The Internal Auditor is familiar with the criteria on financial matters applied to local councils and the Audit Commission's current 'Light Touch' audit process and has access to "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England)". There is no evidence/reason to believe that the internal audit will not be carried out competently, ethically and with integrity and objectivity.

### 2.3.3 Frequency of Internal Audit

One internal audit undertaken after the annual accounts have been prepared is considered to be adequate for the Parish Council's needs given the current level of activity.

### 2.3.4 Scope of Work

The scope of the internal audit work carried out by the Internal Auditor follows the suggested approach to internal audit provided by the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England)".

### 2.3.5 Audit Report

The Internal Auditor will prepare a report in their own name and addressed to the Council following their completion of the internal audit. It will be presented to the Parish Council at the next meeting after it has been issued. Act actions to be taken on the recommendations made will be minuted.

## 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Town Council considers for itself whether the system of internal audit is sufficiently effective, using this report as prepared by the Parish Clerk as a starting point for those considerations.



**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL  
INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST  
PART 1 – MEETING STANDARDS**

*(Source: "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England),  
Part 2: The Annual Return and corporate governance.)*

EXPECTED STANDARD	EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT	YES/NO	AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. <b>Scope of Internal Audit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Terms of reference for internal audit were approved by the Parish Council on 22 September 2010.</li> <li>▪ Internal audit work takes into account both the Council's risk assessment and wider internal control arrangements.</li> <li>▪ Internal audit work covers the Council's anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
2. <b>Independence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance.</li> <li>▪ Reports are made in own name to management.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor does not have any other role within the Council.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
3. <b>Competence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is no evidence of a failure to carry out internal audit work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
4. <b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All responsible officers (Clerk/RFO and Finance Officer) are consulted on the internal audit plan.</li> <li>▪ Respective responsibilities for officers and the Internal Auditor are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	

	<p>corruption matters (job descriptions and engagement letter).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The responsibilities of Council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary.</li> </ul>	Y	
5. <b>Audit Planning and Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The annual internal audit plan properly takes account of all the risks facing the Council.</li> </ul>	Y	

**Review conducted on behalf of the Council by:**

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 24 March 2021:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL  
INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST  
PART 2 – CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVENESS**

*(Source: "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England),  
Part 2: The Annual Return and corporate governance.)*

EXPECTED STANDARD	EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT	YES/NO	AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. <b>Internal audit work is planned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planned internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the Council's needs.</li> </ul>	Y	
2. <b>Understanding the whole Council, its needs and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance for the Council's Annual Governance Statement.</li> </ul>	Y	
3. <b>Be seen as a catalyst for change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor supports the Council's work in delivering improved services to the community.</li> </ul>	Y	
4. <b>Add value and assist the Council in achieving its objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council makes positive responses to the Internal Auditor's recommendations and follows up with action where this is called for.</li> </ul>	Y	
5. <b>Be forward looking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National agenda changes are considered in formulating the annual audit plan.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.</li> </ul>	Y  Y	
6. <b>Be challenging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor focuses on the risks facing the Council.</li> </ul>	Y	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor encourages officers and Members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations.</li> </ul>	Y	
7. <b>Ensure the right resources are available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate resource is made available for the Internal Auditor to complete his work.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor understands the Council and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates.</li> </ul>	Y  Y	

**Review conducted on behalf of the Council by:**

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 24 March 2021:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

## SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

#### 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 imposes a duty on local councils to ensure “that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control”.
- 1.2 Local councils are required to conduct, at least once a year, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. The council is required to sign the Annual Governance Statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.
- 1.3 In order for the Parish Council to review the effectiveness of the Internal Control System there needs to be clarity on the internal controls in place.
- 1.4 Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations document but the system of controls goes beyond this. A Statement of internal Controls has been prepared and is appended to this report.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Parish Council consider the attached Statement of Internal Controls and consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

<p><b>Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Cash Book is kept up-to-date from original documents (paying-in books, invoices, cheque stubs).</li> <li>▪ The Cash Book is reconciled to the bank statement on a monthly basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Regulations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A document listing the Parish Council’s financial regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC, is maintained. The regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Parish Council.</li> <li>▪ The Financial Regulations are complemented by the approved “Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Order/Tender Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotations or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work.</li> <li>▪ Official letters/Purchase Orders are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal Powers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A proper legal power is identified in advance of any expenditure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Payment Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Depending on the nature of the supply, the RFO initials the purchase invoice to indicate that the supply has been received, that the supply has not been previously paid and that the invoice calculations are correct.</li> <li>▪ Purchase Orders/letters ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable.</li> <li>▪ A Schedule of Payments is presented to every ordinary meeting of the Parish Council for approval (such approval is recorded in the Minutes).</li> <li>▪ All cheques and financial documents are signed by three Councillors.</li> <li>▪ Original invoices are provided to the Councillors signing the cheques.</li> <li>▪ The cheque number used to settle an invoice is noted on the invoice for cross reference purposes.</li> </ul>

<p><b>The Free Resource, i.e. LGA 1972, s.137</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A separate s.137 account is maintained.</li> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO calculates the maximum amount of s.137 expenditure able to be made each year and ensures that it is not exceeded.</li> <li>▪ The proper minute authorising expenditure from s.137 is prepared on each occasion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VAT Repayment Claims</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council.</li> <li>▪ The RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable.</li> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Income Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The RFO ensures that the amount of Precept received is correct in accordance with the Precept request submitted to the District Council.</li> <li>▪ The RFO ensures that the Precept instalments are received when due.</li> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO ensures that all other receipts are received when due and correctly calculated.</li> <li>▪ Income is banked promptly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Reporting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The performance to date and latest year end forecast against the agreed annual Budget are presented to each meeting of the Parish Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Budgetary Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council.</li> <li>▪ The Precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the District Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Payroll Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All staff are paid under PAYE.</li> <li>▪ All staff salaries are set by the Parish Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salaries.</li> <li>▪ Salaries are currently paid by cheque; all cheques are signed by three Councillors.</li> <li>▪ The RFO will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.</li> </ul>

<b>Asset Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO maintains a full Asset Register.</li> <li>▪ The existence and condition of assets is checked on an annual basis.</li> <li>▪ The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council’s assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.</li> </ul>
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**Prepared by:**

Ms J Minor, Town Clerk and RFO  
17 March 2021

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 24 March 2021:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....