FOSTON & THORNTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 02 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7.00PM

Councillors Present:	Simon Burton David Johnson Christine Walker	Evelyn Conlon Bryan Pillow
In Attendance:	Fiona Hill - Parish Clerk	
Public Present:	0	

22/98a **To receive apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting:**
Parish Councillors Calum Balding and Paul Readey*
NYCC and RDC Councillor Caroline Goodrick

22/98b **To consider the approval of reasons given for absence:**
Resolved – Approved (Unanimous)*

22/99 **To record declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None

22/100 **To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 05 January 2022:**
Resolved – Approved (Unanimous)

22/101 **To discuss new planning applications received:** None

22/102 **Public Session** – The Parish Council will, time permitting, adjourn the council meeting for a short time to allow for public comment and questions regarding any remaining items in the agenda. No response will be given. (None received)

22/103 **To discuss matters arising from previous minutes:**
- Community Event – Saturday 23 April 2022 – 0900-1200 hrs
Councillors discussed arrangements – village hall booked
- Jubilee Event – Sunday 05 June 2022 @ 1300 hrs
Councillors discussed arrangements – toilets booked, venue Clearys field, bring your own picnic/drink
Resolved - £500 would be moved from General Reserve to Earmarked, to cover Jubilee Cost e.g. toilet hire and insurance. Unspent monies would be returned to general reserve before the year end 31 March 2023. (Unanimous)

22/104 **Councillors to discuss long-standing matters:**
- White Swan Inn – Nothing to report
- Flaxton Moor T-junction – Nothing to report

- Village Sign – Cllr Pillow would fix nameplate
- Highways issues – Nothing to report
- BT Phone Box (Thornton-le-Clay) – Nothing to report
- Rights of Way – The Parish Clerk would attempt to resolve confusion
- Questionnaire/Newsletter – Nothing to report
- Emergency/Resilience/Good Neighbours Plans – Nothing to report
- Defibrillators/First Aid Training – Nothing to report

22/105 To discuss matters raised by Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer:

- Bookkeeping records to date - Cllrs had received copies of the spreadsheet via email, including a bank reconciliation totalling £9522.36, along with an income & expenditure.
- Financial Management -

Internal Control Check(s) – Cllrs conducted a number of checks and everything was found to be in order.
Internal Audit report for year ended 31 March 2021 – Updated review at end of these minutes
Internal Audit 31 March 2022 – YLCA would be asked to do this
Property Checks –Cllr Johnson would conduct them next month.
Yorkshire Local Councils Association - NTR
Payment approval – None

22/106 To report any new correspondence received by the council: None

22/107 To receive matters raised by members: None

22/108 To confirm the dates of the future meeting(s) on Wednesdays at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Thornton-le-Clay:

02Mar22,
06Apr22 – Annual Parish Meeting, followed by Parish Council meeting
04May22 – Annual Parish Council Meeting, followed by Parish Council meeting
01Jun22, 06Jul22, 03Aug22, 07Sep22, 05Oct22, 02Nov22, 07Dec22

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Review of Internal Audit Comments for 2020/2021

Numbers refer to the points on the internal audit report checklist. Bold & italics show internal auditor comments. 'RFO' are Parish clerk's (RFO) comments. 'C' are Chair's comments

1.3 – ***Internal audit control*** - ***Despite this being raised at previous years internal audit, no progress made***
F: It did get haphazard and then Covid stopped it all together. From next meeting, I suggest it is done in the meeting as it used to be. Cllrs/Clerk want to rush away after meeting. During the meeting allows all Cllrs to be involved and queries to be minuted. YLCA template sent, which has been used before and will be re-introduced.
C: It is difficult to understand the comment 'no progress made' as the year before the pandemic we went through the internal control document at almost every meeting. Given that we do not have to meet every month, then this should be sufficient
Update: Internal Controls are now conducted at each meeting

1.4. – ***VAT recorded but not reclaimed***
F: I always reclaim VAT, for the previous year, after the internal audit, just in case any errors are found.
C: This should have been noted on the auditor's comments. (VAT was not late in being claimed)

1.5 – ***No detail of payment authorised recorded in meeting minutes. Some invoices requested not provided***
F: I would agree. It did get haphazard and then Covid stopped it all together. From next meeting, I ensure all payments are recorded going forward.
C: Why were invoices requested not provided? Auditor should have mentioned the delegated powers here, although payments should still have been minuted.
Update: Payments are now recorded in minutes

2.1. – ***No Audit Plan in place and being used throughout the year***
F: YLCA template sent, which can be added to future agenda for discussion
Update: YLCA template shown below

2.4 **–** ***Standing Orders reviewed in the year? No. Only adopted within this year***
F: As adopted in year, I am not sure why the comment was made
C: The Standing Orders were reviewed when adopted. The comment makes it seem as though we didn't have, previously, any SOs but we have had them for years.

2.6 – ***Payments made by SO and DD no reference to procedure/internal controls for such payments (in financial regulations)***

Approved …………………………………………… Chairman Date..............................

F: I agree, a statement, say in the APCM minutes, approving DDRs/STOs, would be a good practise
C: The Financial Regulations do refer to DDs, SOs BACs payments & bank transfer (see 5.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9). The only one we have is Clerk's salary? Agree we should approve current DDs & SOs for the year at APCM.
Update: Added to agenda for approval at the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM)

2.7 – ***Equal Opportunities Policy*** ***2013 – no evidence of review. Policies reviewed regularly – to ensure fit for purpose***
F: Full policy review recorded at the 2021 APCM
C: The review at APCM should have been noted in auditor's comments.
Update: Policy Review on APCM and update policies to be uploaded on website

2.8. – Same issue as 2.6 re DDs & SOs

2.9 – ***Members interests -*** ***No register of interests displayed on website as required by law***
F: In the process of asking Cllrs to complete RDC form on line, then a link from the PC website to the RDC website can be added.
C: Members interests are displayed on Ryedale website. This should have been noted in auditors comment. In fact the comment is incorrect as they are on a website for public view.

2.11 – ***Notice of meeting -*** ***No evidence supplied – summons on website rather than public notice***
F: The correct procedure is to display a "Public Notice", rather than a "Summons", which is sent to Cllrs.
C: A notice is displayed on the notice board. Short of having a photo of it, the auditor should accept that this happens for each meeting. Hence the comment is incorrect.

2.12 – ***Purchasing authority defined in FRs? No.***
F: A suggestion/comment would have been helpful, so some advice should be requested
C: We do not understand what this comment refers to. The FRs are taken from a template provided by YLCA.

3.1 – ***Unusual activity in minutes. -*** ***Decision made without requisite agenda item; under correspondence, matters raised by members and matters from previous minutes. Exclusion of the Press and Public incorrect legislation quoted. All business must be specified on agenda. Exclusion of the press and public – requisite agenda item and minutes example***
F: Says Yes, (there was unusual activity in minutes) then comment, as thought No, so not sure what she is means?! There is some helpful guidance on exclusion of press and public.
C: Again, we do not understand what this comment refers to. Will check quoted legislation re exclusion of press & public. Seems to be saying that we cannot make a decision under matters raised by members or matters from previous minutes. Surely

not correct. We will need to follow up with auditor. Meanwhile we must ensure that all items are noted separatley as far as possible.
Update – Agenda wording updated

3.2 – ***Annual risk assessment carried out? (Financial risk assessment) - No***
F: This does need some work
C: The risk assessment was reviewed informally during the year but not minuted at a council meeting. We must do this this year.
Update: Cllr Walker to review the risk assessments

3.4 – ***Evidence of annual insurance review? No no review undertaken in 2020/21.***
F: This was detailed in the minutes of the 2021 APCM

3.5 – ***Minutes initialled, each page identified and overall signed? No***
F: Minutes couldn't be signed during Covid, but usually are.
C: Auditor should have made reference to the pandemic & the fact that we were not passing papers around at that time. Minutes are now signed.

4.5 – ***Level of reserves - Balance carried forward form 2019/20 £9332 and precept demand increased – no reference to why such large sum is kept in reserves, capital (earmarked) reserves minimal and contingency reserves at 12 running costs for 12 months = circa £2600***
F: Not sure I agree with her assessment, but happy to discuss this
C: No reference by auditor of ring-fenced funds which are included in the balance of c £9k. However our general fund is above the recommended limit. (This auditor quotes 3 to 12 months worth, previous ones have quoted 2.5x annual). In my view 3-12 months worth of balance is not sufficient.

Section 5 – ***No evidence provided for payroll***
F: I submitted the information I thought she asked for.
C: As Parish clerk thinks she supplied the evidence then there is a miscommunication that the auditor should have addressed before finalisation of internal audit. Councillors see payslips & IR payments.

6.2 – 6.3 – ***Fixed assets - Valuations are not consistent with proper Practices, some assets (costs) not included***
F: Not sure I agree, there are values on the register.
C: I do not agree either. The fixed assets all have values on. They are at the lower of cost or current value. (Nil in some cases). The auditor needs questioning on this.
Update: Register to be reviewed at the APCM

6.4 – ***Property inspection need to be conducted/recorded each month***
C: These were done regularly but not recorded in the minutes every time. We need to ensure that this is done in future.
Update: Inspections minuted and reports kept on file

7.1 – 7.3 – ***Bank Reconciliation carried out on receipt of statement? Mentioned in minutes but no evidence supplied***
F: Evidence was provided for year end, so not sure what this is all about.
C: The bank statement is reconciled in the accounts every month. The auditor must have seen the monthly accounts so no reason for this comment.

9.1 – ***Council adopts an action plan to address all matters raised by internal audit***
F: I agree, so to review/action
C: This document review is part of that

9.2 – ***No evidence provided – no Code of Conduct on website or provided***
F: Again, has been previously minuted and review recorded in minutes of 2021 APCM
C: Cannot understand why the auditor could not see the Code of Conduct. It has been approved previously. Check website.
Update: Code of Conduct to be uploaded to website

9.4 – ***Are all electronic files backed up? No evidence provided***
F: Not sure evidence was requested, but I can confirm files are backed up to cloud via Outlook account
C: Councillors need to be satisfied that there are backups to files.

9.5 - No evidence of FOI publication scheme mandatory for parish council
F: Again, has been previously minuted and review recorded in minutes of 2021 APCM
C: Same comment as 9.2.

9.6 – ***Despite this being raised in last years internal audit the council does not comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities: - List of Councillor responsibilities not published - Agendas for meetings, not published - Expenditure over £100 not published - All meeting documents not published***
F: Yes, fair point, I will ensure the website as a matter of urgency, on my return from holiday
C: Agendas are published on notice board & usually on website (maybe not every month though). Unsure what list of councillor's responsibilities would be except to note Chair & Vice Chair. Need to check what meeting documents are necessary on website. Minutes are there.
Update: Parish Clerk to ensure the website is up to date

9.7 - ***No evidence of compliance with UK GDPR – privacy policy***
F: Again, has been previously minuted and review recorded in minutes of 2021 APCM
C: Same comment as 9.2

9.9 – ***No evidence of compliance with UK GDPR – data audit***
F: I did conducted a data audit, after attending YLCA training, so I will complete the paperwork, present at a future meeting and keep on file
Update: Parish Clerk to conduct data audit at year end

9.16 - ***Employment policies are dated 2013 with no evidence of review – grievance and Disciplinary Policies therefore not fit for purpose***

F: Again, has been previously minuted and review recorded in minutes of 2021 APCM

C: We must ensure the reviews are dated on the documents.

Update: To ensure reviews are recorded at the APCM

Transaction spot check – some invoices not provided, cheque stubs not signed.

C: We need to check that we have those invoices. Refer to comment at 3.5 re pandemic issues preventing signing of papers.

Update: All documentation in available

…………………….. Council

AUDIT PLAN – YEAR ENDED …………

This Audit Plan runs from January of each year. It actually covers three financial years – a review of the audit of the previous financial year, the audit of the current financial year and the appointment of the internal auditor for the new financial year that starts in April.

Tasks below can be undertaken by full council, a committee or a sub-committee unless defined otherwise.

Other recommended actions to be scheduled in are:
Risk assessment exercises – on assets and financial risk assessment, ie review that the council has safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money that it holds
Comprehensive review of the insurance policy
Internal control needs to include a review of employment arrangements, particularly around payment of salaries, ie that the correct salary is being paid and the council's liabilities need to be met.
VAT – being treated correctly – review this in the year.
Fixed assets and equipment being used correctly with supporting policies in this regard so that employees are aware of the council's expectations.

January	1) Review the effectiveness of independent Internal Audit that the council has had in place for the preceding 12 months. 2) Review the effectiveness of the councils internal financial controls (Using guidance in the Practitioner's Guide). (Good idea to list the aspects of internal control that are recommended and use as a checklist for compliance). 3) Review the Terms of Reference for the Independent Internal Auditor. 4) Appoint and instruct an internal auditor for the next financial year .
February	1) Internal control exercise to be carried out
April	1) Start of the new financial year. 2) Books closed to 31 March, end of year tasks to be completed, including draft completed AGAR on website 3) Council to resolve its exemption from external audit depending on its gross income in the year. 4) End of year information to internal auditor
May /June	1) Council (must be full council), to approve the accounts by the external auditor's deadline and send accounts to EA by deadline 2) Approved AGAR on the council's website 3) Council to receive the independent auditor's detailed report and recommendations and decide action/improvement where necessary
June	1) Notice of public rights of inspection (to include first 10 working days of July)
July	1) Public inspection of accounts to service 2) Council to receive a report from the External Auditor (this could happen later depending on the date of return from the EA)
Sept / Oct	1) Internal control exercise to the carried out 2) If audited, display a notice of conclusion of audit by 30 September (if concluded). (If no conclusion, keep electors informed via website).
November	1) Draft budget to be created and considered (or could be done in December as appropriate) 2) Review of internal controls such as Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
December	1) Draft Audit Plan to be presented to the Council for approval (and implementation from January) 2) Submit precept levy to principal authority (may be done in January)

Approved ……………………………………………… Chairman Date..............................

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