

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF TARVIN PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE EDNA ROSE ROOM, TARVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 25TH MARCH 2024.**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor R Ford (Chairman)  
Councillor E Lush (Chairman and Cheshire West and Chester Council Councillor)  
Councillor P Buckley  
Councillor M Butler  
Councillor D Howorth  
Councillor N Poole  
Councillor P Ryan  
Councillor A Sheppard  
Councillor P Twigg  
Councillor M Williams

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

6 members of the public  
Parish Council Clerk – Mr M Hassall

**APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:**

Councillor S Dutton (unwell)  
Cheshire West and Chester Council – Councillor T Cooper

**23/241 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND DISPENSATIONS**

**23/241.1 New Written Requests for Dispensations**

There were no new requests.

**23/241.2 Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any item of business on the agenda and, if necessary, leave the meeting prior to discussion of that item. No such declarations were made.

**23/242 OPEN FORUM**

**RESOLVED:** that the Council meeting be adjourned for the Open Forum.

**23/243 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** that the Council meeting be reconvened.

**23/244 REPORT ON OPEN FORUM** (This minute was not reported to Council in the formal meeting. It is a record of the items raised in the Open Forum)

A Chartered Town Planner had spoken about the planning permission required for planning application 24/00087/PMA and had explained how and when he and the applicant were aiming to produce a new application which he hoped that Council would support.

**23/245 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2024.**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2024 be signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a correct record.

**23/246 REPORTS ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2024 NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA**

**23/246.1** Parish Spring Clean (Previous Minute 23/236.3).

Ten residents from Oscroft and nine from Tarvin had picked litter in their respective communities on Saturday 16th March. All the main areas had been covered and bags had been left adjacent to litter bins and collected by the Borough Council on 18th March. The general consensus had been that there was less litter to pick on this occasion.

**RESOLVED:** to hold the next clean in the autumn.

**23/246.2** The Limes, Holme Street, Tarvin (Previous Minute 23/229.4)

Councillor Lush reported that a date had yet to be set for the Planning Committee meeting.

**23/246.3** Special Project (Previous Minute 23/233)

**RESOLVED:** that a working party comprising of Councillors Ford, Poole, and Williams be established to plan the project.

**23/247 PLANNING MATTERS**

**23/247.1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2024.**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2024 be signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a correct record

**23/247.2 Planning Applications**

**RESOLVED:** that the following comments be made on the planning applications submitted:

**24/00550/FUL** - Rear dormer to loft conversion with front rooflight – 41 The Ridgeway, Tarvin

Comment: No objection

**24/00425/FUL** - Demolition of bungalow and erection of three detached dwellings and widening of existing access – Greystones, Church Street, Tarvin

Comment: No objection

**24/00558/FUL** – Replacement of 8 timber windows to front of property together with replacement front door front porch canopy and rear gate - 2 Pryors Hayes Barns, Willington Road, Tarvin

Comment: No objection

**24/00564/FUL** - Building of sandstone gateposts and making good the current sandstone wall – Fernleigh, Holme Street, Tarvin

Comment: No objection

**23/247.3 Notices**

**24/00087/PMA** - Conversion into one dwelling – 32 – 34 High Street, Tarvin – **PLANNING PERMISSION REQUIRED**

**23/03972/PDQ** - Change of use of agricultural building to residential use - Brook Cottage, Willington Road, Tarvin - **REFUSED**

**23/03042/FUL** - Demolition of outbuilding, extension and conversion of workshop building to enlarge existing dwelling, existing access set between buildings removed and existed boundary wall extended - Lodge Heyes, Shay Lane, Tarvin – **REFUSED**

**23/02441/FUL** – Erection of a Hay and Implement Store (part retrospective) – Brook House Farm, Kelsall Road, Tarvin - **PERMISSION**

#### **23/247.4 APPEAL**

**21/03690/FUL** - Change of Use of land for use as traveller site consisting of 1 static caravan, 3 trailer caravans, day room, septic tank, and landscaping - Land at Tarporley Road, Tarvin – **APPEAL ALLOWED AND PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED**

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk speak to Planning about enforcement.

#### **23/248 KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD**

##### **23/248.1 Annual Power Wash**

The annual power wash was due, and a quotation had been requested.

##### **23/248.2 Co-op Funding (Bench)**

The Co-op had paid £700.77 into Council's bank account. A second and final payment would be made around November 2024. Councillor Twigg confirmed that she and the Clerk would look to find an appropriate bench later in the year.

##### **23/248.3 CCTV**

The meeting noted that the Annual maintenance service on the system had been carried out by the contractor on 20th March 2024. No issues had been reported.

#### **23/249 DEFIBRILLATOR**

The previous meeting had received an estimate of a further £4,553.25 to complete the work at the Sheaf. A copy of the document is shown under appendix 1 of the minutes of that meeting. The previous meeting had noted that a defibrillator and cabinet had already been purchased at a cost of £1,045 leaving a balance of £2,363.70 left in the budget for the project. Since then further costs had emerged.

**RESOLVED (23/249.1):** not to proceed with a defibrillator for the Sheaf mainly due to the significant financial cost.

It was reported that at their last meeting the Community Centre Committee of Management had agreed that if Council wanted the defibrillator originally planned for the Sheaf could be located immediately inside the grounds of the Centre. If sited to the right of the car park gates on a post with power coming from the adjacent Centre light it could be made accessible 24 hours a day. The Committee would expect Council to meet all the costs of installation and maintenance but there would be no charge for the power consumed. The caretaker would undertake the weekly check.

**RESOLVED (23/249.2):** to accept the offer. Councillor Ryan was instructed to prepare a programme and costs.

The meeting noted that the existing defibrillator at the Community Centre which was not accessible 24 hours a day would be taken down and used for training NHS nursing staff.

#### **23/250 RISK ASSESSMENT/STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL/INSURANCE REVIEW**

The Finance Working Party had reviewed the above.

##### **23/250.1 Risk Assessment.**

**RESOLVED:** that the risk assessment document attached to the minutes, Appendix 1, be approved.

##### **23/250.2 Statement on Internal Control.**

**RESOLVED:** that the statement of internal control document attached to the minutes, Appendix 2, be approved.

### **23/250.3 Insurance Review**

The Finance Working Party were happy that the existing cover met the requirements of the Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the recommendation be accepted

## **23/251 ROAD SAFETY**

### **23/251.1 Vehicle Activated Signage**

The two signs had been ready for installation towards the end of February but despite many requests Highways had not confirmed the exact position for the sign on Tarporley Road and their late consultation with residents of three properties in Oscroft meant that they had not completed their work on that site. The contractor was requesting payment for the signage and the Finance Working Party, working with the Clerk, recommended that the invoice from the contractor, less the Installation and Commissioning charge, was paid immediately. The full invoice amounted to £6,941.36 plus VAT £1,388.27 a total of £8,329.63. The recommendation was that Council pay £6,191.36 plus VAT £1,238.27 a total of £7,429.63.

**RESOLVED:** that the recommendation be accepted, and Council pay the sum of £7,429.63 immediately.

### **23/251.2 A51 Road Tarvin to Stamford Bridge**

The Cheshire West and Chester Council Road Safety Engineer had written to say that they were not prepared to review the speed limit as the most recent assessment for this section recommended no change in the speed limit and there hadn't been any changes other than improvements since then and as a high-quality A class road the outcome of a new assessment was unlikely to recommend any changes.

## **23/252 PARKING**

### **23/252.1 A54 Road**

At the previous meeting, a Millside Close resident had expressed concerns about vehicles parking on the A54 road and also on the grass verge close to the entrances of Millside Close and the Co-op. He had also highlighted the difficulty of turning into each from the middle of the road.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk ask Highways to install appropriate markings/lines along the road to make it clear that parking was not allowed.

### **23/252.2 High Street**

Tarvin Post Office had requested an allocated parking space outside the Post Office for the benefit of customers. They believed that they suffer loss of business frequently due to no spaces being available.

Whilst Council sympathised with the request, it was **RESOLVED** not to consult with Highways as it would be virtually impossible to provide an allocated parking space which could be enforced.

### **23/252.3 Village Parking**

To date only one business had responded and that was a verbal response. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

## **23/253 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **23/253.1 Review of Neighbourhood Plan**

At the West Cheshire Town and Parish Council Conference held on 6th March 2024 the Chief Planning Officer had recommended not reviewing Neighbourhood Plans at the present time.

**RESOLVED:** not to review the plan at the present time.

**23/253.2 Affordable Housing**

At the previous meeting a resident had asked when more affordable housing was likely to be built in Tarvin Parish.

The meeting noted that under the current rules no further affordable housing would be built in the Parish before the year 2030.

**23/254 WALL - CHURCH STREET AND LOWER HIGH STREET**

**23/254.1. Church Street by St Andrews Church.**

The wall did not appear to have deteriorated during the last year, but it was thought that the adjacent tree was probably slowly moving the wall.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk ask the Conservation Officer whether any permissions would be required to remove the tree and also who in their opinion was responsible for it.

**23/254.2 Lower High Street between Pool Bank and the A54 junction.**

A small part of the wall had been reported as dangerous by a member of the public. It was thought that Oscroft Hall was responsible for the wall.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk ask for the wall to be made safe.

**23/255 CLERK’S REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE**

**23/255.1** The following e-mail correspondence had been forwarded to Councillors who were provided with an opportunity to comment on them.

- a. Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) – E Bulletins.
- b. Connected Communities 2024 – 1st May 2024, Crewe Alexandra Stadium, Gresty Road, Crewe CW2 6EB.
- c. Information Commissioner's Office Newsletter – March 2024
- d. Cheshire West and Chester Council - Local Plan Evidence Base Consultation 2024. (The Planning Committee had met on 12th March 2024 to consider a response)
- e. Cheshire Police Crime Prevention Webinars
- f. ChALC Online Survey - Supporting our Communities.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk complete the survey

- g. Cheshire Community Action update March 2024

**23/255.2 Electricity Supply**

The meeting noted that Scottish Power had written to say that Council would need to find a new supplier as they had announced their exit from this particular market.

**23/255.3 United Utilities/MWH Treatment Ltd**

The Clerk reported that the proposed project reported to the June 2022 Council meeting had been shelved.

**23/256 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**23/256.1 February 2024 Payments and Payments between meetings**

Councillor Ford had confirmed in writing that all payments had been made as approved by Council.

**23/256.2 RESOLVED:** that the following payments made since the last meeting be confirmed:

**Payments between meetings.**

Payee and Detail	Amount to be Paid inc. VAT	Amount net of VAT	Budget Provision

		(charge against budget)	available before payment
<b>Groundforce Landscape Ltd</b> Remove old goals, assemble, and install new ones, remark pitch – King George V Playing Field	<b>1,134.00</b>	945.00	Members Budget
<b>Crime Prevention Services Group Ltd</b> Annual Maintenance Fee – CCTV System on King George V Playing Field	<b>161.94</b>	134.95	0.00
<b>Mr M Hassall</b> Reimbursement of Expenditure New Battery for defibrillator on King George V Playing Field	<b>246.00</b>	205.00	227.78
<b>St Andrews Church Tarvin</b> Churchyard Grant from Cheshire West and Chester Council	<b>879.63</b>	879.63	N/A

**23/256.3 RESOLVED:** that the following payments be authorised, and that payments be made by internet banking:

Payee and Detail	Amount to be Paid inc. VAT	Amount net of VAT (charge against budget)	Budget Provision available before payment
<b>Water Plus Ltd</b> Water King George V Playing Field – 11th February to 10th March 2024	<b>35.95</b>	35.95	0.00
<b>Tarvin Community Centre</b> Hire of Room for Council Meetings – January, February, March 2024 plus Finance Working Party Meeting 4th January and Planning Committee Meeting 12th March.	<b>86.95</b>	86.95	88.02
<b>TWM Traffic Control Systems Ltd</b> Two vehicle activated signs	<b>7,429.63</b>	1,238.27	CIL
<b>Payroll</b> March 2024	<b>1,545.72</b>	1,545.72	4,308.75
<b>HMRC</b> PAYE and Nat Insce. January to March 2024.	<b>1,712.09</b>	1,712.09	2,763.03

**23/256.4 Direct Debits**

The meeting noted the following direct debit payments:

British Telecom Plc – 29th February 2024 – Telephone and Internet February 2024 – two venues – £127.98.

Sage Global Services Ltd - 6th March 2024 - Payroll Software March 2024 - £9.60

**23/256.5 Ear-marked reserves and planned capital expenditure.**

The meeting noted that the vehicle activated signage would not be installed by 31st March 2024 and so it needed to be highlighted as planned capital expenditure, and that the Playground Equipment Capital Fund balance would amount to £17,873.96.

**23/256.6. Fixed Asset Schedule March 2024**

The meeting confirmed the Fixed Asset Schedule at March 2024.

**23/256.7 Section 137 Payments Year to March 2024.**

The meeting confirmed the Section 137 payments for the Year to 31st March 2024. A copy of the document is attached to the minutes under Appendix 3.

**23/257 LIST OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

The report was noted.

**23/258 DOG FOULING**

Councillor Lush reported that a resident of Tarvin had been in contact with him regarding dog fouling. She had suggested that it might be a good idea for children at the primary school to be asked to produce a poster highlighting the diseases associated with dog fouling. The suggestion was being considered by the school and a response was awaited. Councillor Lush and the resident had offered a £50 prize for the winning entry and Councillor Lush would pay for any printing and weather proofing of the winning entry.

**23/259 TOPICS FOR PUBLICATION**

spring clean, defibrillator, travellers' site.

**23/260 DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Monday 22nd April 2024 – 7.15pm - Edna Rose Room, Tarvin Community Centre

**23/261 RESOLUTION** – “That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw” (personal data, staff conditions of employment)

**23/262 STAFF TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**RESOLVED:** that the terms of employment be amended accordingly.

## APPENDIX 1

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT 2023/24

Area	Risk	Level	Control (+ agreed and recommended improvements)
Assets	Security of land, playground equipment etc	L	Fencing and gates around the playground on the King George V Playing Field are regularly inspected. Main gate on King George V Playing Field is normally left open overnight. It is possible to lock the main gates if necessary. CCTV Cameras were installed on roof of Scout & Guide Hut in November 2017. Litter pickers are securely stored in Tarvin Community Centre. Defibrillators at the Green Oscroft and King George V Playing Field are regularly maintained. Noticeboards on High Street Tarvin and the Green Oscroft are regularly checked. The Oscroft board was completely refurbished in 2021 and one of the Tarvin boards was replaced in 2022.
	Maintenance of assets etc	L	<u>Pinfold/Duckers Well.</u> The area is maintained by Tarvin Gardening Society. <u>Street Lighting</u> Structural checks are carried out every 3 years, electrical tests every 6 years. Electrical tests have been undertaken by BAM Nuttall Ltd in February 2010 and March/April 2014 and by Centregreat Ltd in June 2017. Structural checks have been carried out by BAM Nuttall Ltd in February 2010 and December 2013 and by Centregreat Ltd in June 2017. Structural checks were carried out by Grid Civils Ltd in 2020. All existing lanterns were replaced with LED ones in February/March 2021. Electrical checks were carried out at the same time.
	Security of Equipment	L	Christmas lights are kept in the locked garage of a Councillor and are tested prior to use
Finance	Banking	L	One Current Account and one Business Call Account with Lloyds Bank Plc + Lloyds 32 and/or 95 day notice accounts Two signatures are required on all cheques. Online payments are approved in advance by Council, entered and paid by the Clerk, and checked on a monthly basis by a Councillor who provides a written note confirming that payments have been made in accordance with Council approval.
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	L	No Petty Cash. No cash payments. Receipts issued for any cash received. Whenever practically possible any cash received is banked on the first



			working day following receipt. Fidelity cover of £150,000 is in place.
	Financial controls and records	M	<p>Monthly bank reconciliation prepared by Clerk. All payments approved by Council. Receipts and Payments Account received by the Council meeting on a quarterly basis.</p> <p><u>Internal and external audit.</u></p> <p>The most recent Internal Audit was carried out by JDH Business Services Ltd and the most recent external audit was carried out by PKF Littlejohn LLP. JDH Business Services Ltd were appointed by the Parish Council. PKF Littlejohn LLP were appointed by SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd). Copies of the relevant documents signed by the auditors are attached.</p>
	Comply with Customs and Excise Regulations	M	Clerk is competent with VAT. Use VAT help line when necessary. VAT payments and claims calculated by Clerk. Internal and external auditor to provide check.
	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept	M	Finance Working Party and Council receive detailed budgets in the late autumn. Since 2007 Councillors receive a detailed 1-year budget and indicative budgets for the next 2 Financial Years. Precept derived directly from this. Expenditure against budget reported to Council on a quarterly basis. General reserves are at an acceptable level and are kept under review. Council has determined to build up a fund in order to be able to replace equipment on the King George V Playing Field once it has reached the end of its economic life and also to cover the future replacement of the Clerk.
	Complying with borrowing restrictions	L	As laid down by Local Authority Regulations. Council operates a policy of positive balance. There is currently no borrowing.
	Payroll – Loss of data on PC	L	A cloud based payroll is used. Paper copies are kept for audit purposes. These could also be used to input on HMRC Tools in an emergency.
	Business continuity and disaster recovery	L	The Parish Council has considered the risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance. Documents are automatically saved on both One Drive and Desk Top Pc.
	Grants to Local Organisations	L	The Parish Council only makes a grant to a local body if it has budgeted for it. The grant is released on request and it is a requirement to see the latest set of accounts and to be told how the grant was used. For a new body or a one-off request the Council will request a financial statement with the application.

	Supplier Fraud	L	Fraud can manifest in many ways including a fraudster disguising themselves as a known supplier or a regular supplier intentionally overcharging. All new suppliers are checked to ensure that they are genuine. Existing procedure adequate.
	Payment Fraud	L	Payments to suppliers verified to ensure correct payment details are used.
General Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	<p>Insurance in place. Insurance headings reviewed annually. Open spaces checked regularly. Trees on King George V Playing Field investigated when damage reported. Tree Inspection Survey is carried out on these trees every three years.</p> <p>Minor remedial work recommended by risk assessment of trees in 2011, 2014, and 2017 were carried out.</p> <p>A Mountain Ash tree at the bottom end of the KGVPF was badly damaged during poor weather in April 2019. Under the circumstances a full Tree Inspection Survey was undertaken by fully qualified, certified arborist and the minor remedial work was carried out.</p> <p>A Tree Inspection Survey was carried out on the trees at the Green, Oscroft in 2017. Further formal inspections will be carried out every three years.</p> <p>Minor remedial work recommended following a risk assessment of all trees was carried out in 2022.</p> <p>A power wash is carried out annually on the Children's Play Area on the King George V Playing Field.</p> <p>Structural checks on lighting columns are carried out every 3 years, electrical tests every 6 years.</p>
	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership (King George V Playing Field)	H  L	<p>Insurance in place. Weekly check by appropriately qualified Councillor (Councillor P Twigg) with written record. Annual check by an Independent Body and appropriate actions are taken if required. Log kept of reported incidents and appropriate actions are taken as required. Weekly inspections of the field are carried out by the Clerk and a written log kept. The Community Amenity Officer who works on the field five days per week reports any issues immediately. CCTV Cameras on Scout and Guide Hut.</p> <p>All waste bins are installed away from buildings in case of fire</p>
	Access for All	L	In respect of the King George V Playing Field the Council has appropriate legal agreements which ensure all facilities are available to all local residents provided any age restrictions are followed and appropriate supervision is in place
	Community Clear Up Day	L	In March 2015 the Parish Council promoted a Community Clear-up Day and prepared a

			separate risk assessment for the briefing of volunteers. Insurance cover had been separately confirmed in writing. Regular clear up days continue to be undertaken.
Employer Liability	Comply with Employment Law	L	Clerk is competent with Employment Law. Membership of various national and regional bodies. Clerk's contract and conditions of employment and duties reviewed as and when recommended by the National Association of Local Council Clerks or by the Council. Other employees are similarly reviewed.
	Comply with HMRC requirements	L	Clerk is competent with PAYE. Regular advice from HM Revenue and Customs and Sage. Internal and external auditors carry out annual checks.
	Comply with Health and Safety Requirements	M	Clerk must be conversant with Health and Safety Regulations and seek guidance as required. Carry out written risk assessments and recommend any appropriate action. Periodic training updates will be undertaken if required.
	Comply with Data Protection	L	Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency and receives regular updates and considers that it meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016. Data Inventory/Recording Keeping Document updated by Clerk and a Councillor 2019/20. Insurance Data Protection Act Cover £500,000.
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	M	Clerk clarifies legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary from the legal department of Cheshire West and Chester Council and/or National Association of Local Councils.
	Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes etc	L	Council meets monthly and receives and approves Minutes of Committee Meetings and reports from working groups held in the interim. Minutes are available to press and public and are posted on the Parish Council website and on the noticeboard at Tarvin Community Centre. To keep residents informed notes of meetings are normally prepared within seven days of the meeting and placed on the Village Noticeboard and Parish Council website. Council provides regular updates for the Website Tarvinonline..
	Proper document control	L	Leases and legal documents in Clerk's filing cabinet. Copies of all leases are kept at Cullimore Dutton, solicitors. Old Minutes are kept in the County Record Office.
Councillor Propriety	Registers of Interests and gifts and hospitality in place	L	Register of interest completed. Register is present at each Council meeting and members are reminded that their entries need to be kept up to

			date. Formal reminder sent by Clerk to Councillors by e-mail in May each year.
	Declaration of Interest	L	At each meeting all Councillors are asked to declare any “Pecuniary Interest”, “Outside Body Interest”, or “Family, Friend or Close Associate Interest in any item of business on the agenda and, if necessary, to leave the meeting prior to discussion of that item.
	Statutory Duty – Introduction of New Statutory Instruments	M	Clerk allocated additional time/hours to deal with new legislation. The annual budget includes provision for training.
Archives	Old Paper Records	L	Some documents are now housed in a secure cupboard in the Community Centre and the Clerk has a key.

**APPENDIX 2**

**STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024**

**1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Tarvin Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Councillors, as servants of the public, take seriously and operate to the seven standards of public life as set down by Lord Nolan; these are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council’s functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

**2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and, except for the details of significant internal control issues at section 5, accords with proper practice.

**3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT**

**a. The Council:**

The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful as advised and proactively guided by the Clerk to the Council who is professionally qualified (AQA Certificate in Local Council Administration – Distinction). The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following financial year no later than its January meeting. It also sets out an indicative budget for the following 2 years.

The Council monitors progress against objectives, performs budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters and minutes these.

The Council usually meets twelve times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving reports from Councillors and the Clerk to the Council. Council receives a regular report on outstanding matters both financial and nonfinancial.

The Council carries out an annual review of its internal controls, systems, and procedures.

b. The Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with law and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to. The Clerk is appropriately qualified.

c. Payments:

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Councillors must sign every cheque. Photocopies of the signed cheques are kept with the appropriate purchase invoices. No cash payments are made. Online payments are approved by Council, entered and paid by the Clerk, and checked on a monthly basis by a Councillor who provides a written note confirming that payments have been made in accordance with Council approval. All Direct Debit payments are reported to Council meetings in accordance with Financial Standing Orders

d. Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

e. Training:

Councillors and the Clerk are encouraged to undertake appropriate training to enable them to carry out their duties efficiently. A sum of money is put aside each year in the budget to fund the training.

f. Internal Audit:

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who on an annual basis examines the Council on the adequacy of it's:

- o Records
- o Procedures
- o Systems
- o Internal Control
- o Regulations
- o Risk Management

g. External Audit:

The Council's External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP, submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council.

#### 4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council, through its Finance Working Party, conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- The full Council
- The Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks.
- The Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control.
- The Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor.
- The number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

**5. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES**

No significant internal control issues were identified by the Internal Auditor during the 2022/ 2023 financial year. Whilst no significant internal control issues were identified during the year, the Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted for internal control.

**APPENDIX 3**

	Inv	£
Section 137 Spending Limit 2023/2024 based on electorate of 2,563, £9.93 per person		25,450.59
Section 137 Spending		
Tarvin Community Centre Grant	11	1,000.00
Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Grant	12	1,000.00
Tarvinonline Grant	13	550.00
Tarvin Village Fete	14	425.00
Tarvin Christmas Festival	15	200.00
Tarvin Toddler Group	16	200.00
St Andrews Church - Donation re work around War Memorial	71	100.00
Royal British Legion Donation	75	300.00
Tarvin Gardening Club Donation	109	250.00
<b>TOTAL FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>4,025.00</b>