

THE IVERS PARISH COUNCIL

27 September 2022

To all Members of the PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of **The Ivers Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 3 October 2022** commencing at **7.00pm** in **Richings Park Sports Club, 34A Wellesley Ave, Iver SL0 9BN** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Louise Steele

Locum Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a. To note any declaration of interest made by Members in connection with an Agenda item. Members to specify the nature of the interest;
- b. To receive any written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests;
- c. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An Open Session will be held for members of the public who may make representations, ask questions or submit evidence about agenda items. If there is a representative from Thames Valley Police, and/or a Buckinghamshire Council Member in attendance, there will be an opportunity for them to report on any relevant matter or ask/answer questions. Each person speaking will usually be limited to three minutes. Duration of this part of the meeting usually to be no longer than fifteen minutes.

4. MINUTES

To consider the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18th July 2022. See Appendix 4.1.

5. CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the committee minutes as detailed below:

- a. Open Spaces and Highways 27th July 2022 – Appendix 6.1
- b. Planning Committee – 9th August 2022 Appendix 6.2
- c. Facilities and Events Committee – 31st August 2022 – Appendix 6.3
- d. Staffing Committee – 18th August 2022 – Appendix 6.4 – to follow

7. FINANCE

- a. To receive the accounts for payment for July & August 2022. See Appendices 7.1 & 7.2
- b. Cllr Stanhope to report on the bank reconciliations undertaken to date.

8. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT AND CERTIFICATE 2021/22

To consider the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22 (see Appendix 8.1) and decide what, if any, action is required.

To note that that the accounts are qualified because the value of fixed assets for 2020/21 was not restated when the accounts for 2021/22 were submitted (AGAR Section 2 Box 9 – See Appendix 8.2). The locum Clerk/RFO provided the following explanation of the difference between Box 9 for 2020/21 and 2021/22 to the external auditor: *“Three factors contributed to this variance. 1. There has been a change of RFO during the year 2021/22 and the new (locum) RFO took the view that in 2020/21 the Fixed Assets were overstated because the valuation basis used was the insurance valuation not cost/current value - therefore the lower value of cost/current value is now being used. 2. There were some omissions and duplications in transferring the assets across to a new asset register in 2020/21 - these were corrected in 2021/22. The net effect of using a lower valuation and the adjustments to the register is a reduction of approximately £500,000. 3. In 2021/22 The Ivers Parish Council was in receipt of legal advice regarding the Iver Heath Recreation Ground Charity of which the Council is the Managing Trustee. As a consequence of that legal advice £917,096 of assets were transferred to the charity reducing the parish council's assets by that sum. Aside from any book adjustments and the transfer of assets to the Charity, assets disposed of in 2021/22 amount to £10,780 and assets purchased were £48,769. The restated value for 2020/21 should be £2,696,923.”*

To note that a Notice of Conclusion of Audit (which must be displayed by 30 September) together with the full AGAR including the External Auditor's Report and Certificate has been displayed on the parish council's website <https://www.iversparishcouncil.gov.uk/finance-reports/> and external noticeboard since 23 September 2022.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT

To appoint a new internal auditor for the Financial Year 2022/23.

At the Annual Meeting of Council on 16 May 2022 Council agreed to re-appoint IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the parish council's internal auditor for the Financial Year 2022/23. However, on 15 August 2022 a letter was received (see Appendix 9.1) saying that IAC will be unable to continue to provide Internal Audit services to the parish council.

The locum Clerk/RFO took advice from the county association, circulated an email to all other Buckinghamshire town/parish clerks and consulted the newly formed sector-specific Internal Audit Forum. Six potential internal auditors have been approached; two have provided quotes, two replied and declined to take on more work and the remaining two sought further information but have not communicated further. The two quotes and the replies from those who declined to quote may be found as confidential Appendix 9.2.

A summary of the two quotes received, compared with the last year costs of the previous internal auditor is below. Both internal auditors who have quoted will undertake audits on

the premises or remotely. Estimated travel costs are included but will not be incurred were a remote audit to be undertaken.

	Previous Provider IAC	Quote 1	Quote 2
	Actual Costs (net)	Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost
Interim Audit	£345.00	£180.00	£275.00
Travel Costs	included above	£32.00	£30.00
Interim Audit	£345.00	£180.00	£275.00
Travel Costs	included above	£32.00	£30.00
TOTAL ANNUAL COST	£690.00	£424.00	£610.00

Council is asked to appoint one of the two providers who have quoted.

10. OPTION TO OPT OUT OF THE SAAA CENTRAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENTS

To receive the recent correspondence from the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) (Appendix 10.1) and to consider whether the parish council should opt out of the SAAA Central External Auditor Appointment Arrangements. Noting that the Locum Clerk & RFO advises in the strongest possible terms that the most cost-effective way of fulfilling the council's statutory obligations is not to opt out.

11. THE IVERS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – THE EXAMINER'S REPORT

To receive the Examiners Report (Appendix 11.1) and to consider the next steps.

12. COMPLAINTS POLICY

To consider an essential amendment to the parish council's Complaints Policy (Appendix 12.1). The current complaints policy refers complainants to the Local Government Ombudsman- see highlighted paragraph. However, the Local Government Ombudsman does not have (and has never had) jurisdiction in relation to town & parish councils (see the LGO's fact sheet on this question <https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/other-topics/parish-councils>) and this incorrect reference needs to be removed as soon as possible.

Members may choose to make additional minor amendments to the policy but this agenda item is not intended to precipitate a time-consuming review of the policy which in other respects appears fit for purpose (though references to the Policy & Finance Committee are now outdated).

13. ACCESSIBLE PARKING IVER HEATH RECREATION GROUND

To consider expenditure of £850, funded from general reserves, on marking car parking spaces at Iver Heath Recreation ground for the use of vehicles holding blue badges. (See quote at Appendix 13.1)

Further, to note that there is currently no budget provision for the maintenance of car parks at either recreation ground and that this will be addressed for 2023/24 by the inclusion of provision in the draft budget for the Facilities and Events Committee to be considered by the committee and council in due course.

14. IVER HEATH ALLOTMENTS – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

To consider expenditure of up to £3,300, funded from general reserves, on repair and maintenance at Iver Heath allotments. See paragraph 2.1 of Appendix 14.1 for details.

15. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDER 3(e) (PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)

To consider whether any amendment is required to Standing Order (SO) 3(e).

That Standing Order reads as follows:

“Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda”.

Councillors who wish to read this SO in context are invited to do so by accessing the full Standing Orders on Sharepoint or on the parish council's website at <https://www.iversparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/55/2021/09/Adopted-Standing-Orders-September-2021.pdf>

A convention seems to have grown up whereby members of the public attend any meeting of the council or its committees to ask any question relating to council business. This is not currently permitted by the relevant Standing Order and that is why the Council is asked to review this particular SO. Additionally it can result in apparently random questions which cannot be addressed adequately at the meeting at which they are received.

Remembering that members of the public can address questions to individual councillors or officers at any time by 'phone, email, letter or personal visit to the office, the locum Clerk feels clarity, that saves individuals' time in attending a meeting to ask a question when the meeting cannot address the issue, would be beneficial. It is suggested that public participation at committee meetings should be confined to matters on the agenda whereas at Full Council meetings public participation may relate to other issues of the Council's business.

It is suggested that SO 3e is amended to read:

Members of the public may make representations, ~~answer~~ ask questions and give evidence at any meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. Members of the public may make representations or ask questions in respect of any matter relating to Council business at an ordinary meeting of the Full Council.

16. REVISED CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

To agree a revised calendar of council meetings for the Council year 2022/23 - Appendix 16.1.

17. IMPROVEMENTS AND EFFECTIVENESS