

Hannington Parish Council: Audit of Accounts 2014-15

Chris Pottinger

06/11/2015

[Documents](#)

To: Barbara Cc: Cllr Simon Taylor, Cllr Janusz Hertz, Cllr Karin Jardine-Brown, Cllr Clare Kinnear

Barbara,

Would you please circulate the following and attachments.

Many thanks.

Chris

Dear Resident,

The Parish Council's Final Accounts 2014-15 were posted 25 April 2015 and, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, were made available for public inspection between 10 June and 10 July 2015.

The Parish Council's Accounts are subject to TWO audits. The first is deemed to be 'internal audit'. It is undertaken by an external independent firm of Accountants. There is an audit fee for their services. The outcome of their audit was reported to the Parish Council at its meeting 21st May 2015. The findings, and the decisions taken thereon by the Council were recorded in detail in the Minutes of that meeting. These Minutes were circulated via Hannington email to all residents.

As Clerk, I have now received the report of the 'external auditors', appointed by the Audit Commission. Their report reminds me of my responsibility to post the Accounts and make them available for public inspection. This, as already reported, was done earlier in the year. However, should any member of the public wish to see the Accounts, then please contact me chrispottinger@live.co.uk.

As Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) I am required to publish the Auditor's findings. I am doing so through this email and the attached extracts from their report. The Auditor's concluded, "*On the basis of the review of the Annual Return, in our opinion the information in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulations have not been met.*"

The Auditors raised THREE "*other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the Council*". These are reproduced in full as the attachments to this email. In summary, they are:-

* **minor reporting issue:** error in completing the Annual Return, with grant monies included in Box 2, rather than Box 3, other receipts. [Response: Noted](#)

* **RFO is a Councillor:** This is a potential breach of S151 Local Government Act 1972. S116 of the Act states that a member of the Council cannot be appointed as an officer...

Response: this issue was not raised by the Auditors during the audit. If it had been they would have been informed that:-

- a. The Clerk resigned mid-way in the year,
- b. The Council advertised the vacancy, as soon as possible, but did not have any applicants.
- c. The Council agreed that it could not function effectively without somebody undertaking the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Clerk/RFO. Cllr Chris Pottinger agreed to act in this role, but would NOT receive any salary.
- d. Cllr Chris Pottinger informed the Council that he would not stand for re-election in the May Elections.
- e. Chris Pottinger was appointed Clerk/RFO with effect from the date of the May Election.

Having taken the action at (e) above, the Parish Council has already implemented the recommendation by the auditors.

* **Village Green ownership unknown:** The auditors noted that the Council has assumed responsibility for maintaining the Village Green. Auditor's recommendation that the Council takes steps to ascertain the legal ownership.

Response: At its meeting on 8th September, the Parish Council agreed the following actions:-

- a. Clerk to contact KPC for reaction/decision.
- b. Clerk to inform HCC Legal Services the Council wishes to employ them to lead on the transfer, and agrees the terms of costs as laid out in their email dated 8 Sept,
- c. Clerk to earmark an initial £750 in the Budget 2015-16 to cover costs.
- d. Parish Council to seek to establish the correct boundaries.

If you have any questions concerning the points raised by the external auditor or the 'Council Responses', please do not hesitate to contact me or the Chairman, Cllr Simon Taylor.

Chris Pottinger,
Clerk, hannington Parish Council

attachments: pages 2, 3 and 4 of auditor's report.