

Report **From:** Lynne Nash Sutton Parish Clerk and RFO
To: Sutton Parish Council and Sarah Hunt Internal Auditor

Title: Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22

Background:

The following source documents were unavailable, incomplete or unfiled when I commenced employment in October 2021. This was a result of circumstances such as corrupted removable disks and movement of paper records in boxes. Not unusual within a small Parish Council. A statement of fact with no implications.

Bank Statements, Receipts, Income and Expenditure Accounts, AGAR 2020/21 and supporting documents and Governance Policies.

No planned induction/contact references for new clerks

Issues Addressed

Access/change arrangements with Barclays Bank were not gained by me until February 2022 and the parameters for view only are adequate but work continues to make them ideal. This is not a problem unique to Sutton PC and a group response/complaint is currently being considered led by NALC. Further time spent by the Sutton PC clerk is not economically efficient and the option to change accounts can be considered. Internal Controls limit the current risk to minimal.

Income and Expenditure accounts included money held in the two Parish Saving accounts. These are now being reported separately with the inclusion of Earmarked Policies and General Reserve Policy. This will better inform the new budget. Section 137 monies should and now do get identified separately to ensure the unlikely allocation beyond its remit. The new budget when set will be linked by updating to the I&E account which in turn will provide better information for Council to consider future spending.(new budget) Future minutes will include in addition to payments a monthly bank reconciliation.

An annual schedule of Parish/Clerk tasks will be produced to inform all of responsibilities and Lead Councillors will be identified.

New model policies will be updated to reflect those individual needs of Sutton.

The new website is up and running. Computer software needs to be updated to make it fully functional and this will be included in future options for Council to consider along with other IT issues .More immediate needs could be met by the purchase of software or third-party input provision.

To address the issues of the earlier corrupted data and filing blips together with the needs of the GDPR and FOI I hold paper records and email records that are easily transferable, this together with the website should resolve future problems if the Clerk is unable to induct a new employee or an employee without the benefit of experience in the role. .In the short term a small fireproof cabinet is required and in the future the Council may choose to consider different IT arrangements.

By last minute chance I have come across the last Sutton PC Risk Assessment Schedule. This again adequate but needs review without delay(July) The adoption of an Earmark Reserve and a General Reserve is planned for Approval in June.

Meeting minuting referencing are currently adequate but basic - Committee date and item no.

Expenditure of £100 plus will be published with the AGAR and a more detailed ASSET register will be published when reviewed and agreed by Council.

The Council has changed its insurance provider to Zurich Municipal on 1 June 2022 following a review of requirements. And with the adoption/review of policies/action items contained in this report completes Sutton PC requirements to Zurich Municipal.

Conclusion

An issue that remains outstanding is payroll. However, I have now been offered help by NALC on either an individual or group basis and the Task will be complete in July 2022.

Formal Induction by NALC will be completed in July 2022.

On receipt of the Internal auditors report we will be aware of my shortcomings in completing the AGAR 21/22 which will need immediate action. This together with the actions I have identified above will ensure Sutton PC operate effectively, efficiently and within Governance requirements.

I might suggest the current contracted hours of the Clerk (16 per Month) will remain insufficient to carry out the role of Clerk in 'normal' circumstances. However, I am grateful that Council has approved additional hours on a month-by-month basis to compensate my input over previous/future months.(Reassessment by council planned for September 2022) I would also confirm for no other reason than your reference I have provided in addition my voluntary time to compensate for my then (and now but less so) inexperience.

Finally, I would like to thank all Sutton Parish Council and in particular the Chairman for their time spent sharing information to help me. Additional special thanks should also be given to Sarah Hunt and Nigel Dixon who have helped both the Chairman and me often from my part with very short notice, and within a description from me that sometimes highlighted that I didn't know what I didn't know.

Lynne Nash

11 June 2022