

Becky Buck

From: CHANCES <chances@norfolk.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 December 2022 09:52
To: CHANCES
Subject: CHANCES Project
Attachments: What our participants say.pdf; A5 Chances Leaflet ALL AUG2022.pdf
Categories: Becky



Dear Parish Council Clerk

We are making contact in the hope that you may be able to help us with our project and in turn we can help your residents in their search for work.

Who are we?

Chances is a partnership between Norfolk County Council, Future Projects, Norfolk Citizens Advice, Voluntary Norfolk and Citizens Advice Diss & Thetford. We are part funded through the European Social Fund with the remainder of our funding being generated within the county. Chances is delivered locally with a team of experienced Advocates working in each district of Norfolk.

Who it's for?

Chances is here to help people who are:-

- Currently unemployed or unable to go into work (because of health reasons, caring responsibilities etc)
- Aged 18 or over (we consider people over 16 in exceptional circumstances)
- Live in Norfolk
- Have the legal right to live and work in the UK
- Motivated to move forwards and make life changes

What does Chances do?

The Chances team of Advocates offer 1:1 guidance to help individuals:-

- Search and prepare for a job
- Improve their skills – e.g. through training or education
- Get into work if they have health issues – e.g. help you access services
- Overcome practical issues – e.g. finding transport, route planning and childcare
- Improve their wellbeing through sport and other activities
- To find out more about our project, and to view our latest advertisement, please visit the following links: -
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/grants-and-funding/european-funding/eu-programmes/business-growth-innovation-and-skills/chances>

<https://youtu.be/FYxO07sQ8Ys>

What can we do for each other?

To date we have worked with over a thousand Norfolk residents and have a proven track record of developing individuals in terms of their skills and their confidence making them more job ready. We can do this for people within your parish boosting their opportunities, providing a positive social impact and economic benefit in your area.

We would love to talk to you more about what we do. To arrange or to speak to a member of the team, please contact us on 01603-222904 or email us at chances@norfolk.gov.uk

All we ask is you take the opportunity to promote our service in your parish. Attached are some posters/flyers that we would be pleased for you to display on your village and community centre noticeboards. I have also attached a slide deck letting you know what our project participants have said about the support they have received from Chances

Thank you for taking the time to read about us and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

With best wishes,
The Chances Team



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To see our email disclaimer click here <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/emaildisclaimer>

Report to Long Stratton Town Council

The Interim Internal Audit Review as at November 2022

1. Introduction and Overall Summary.

1.1 This Internal Audit Report relates to the Interim (Half-yearly) Review completed in November 2022. The Review will lead into and support the End-of-Year Audit which will take place in April/May 2023 following the completion of the 2022/23 Accounts. In this way the Town Council is supported throughout 2022/23 in terms of receiving assurance upon the adequacy and efficiency of key systems in place. Terms of Reference and an Audit Plan were agreed with the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for this Interim Review.

1.2 The Internal Auditor attended the Town Council's offices on 23 November 2022 to complete the Interim Audit, which focussed upon the systems of internal controls operating during the period April 2022 to October 2022. Mrs Becky Buck (Town Clerk and RFO) was present. In addition to the documentation presented to the Internal Auditor, all relevant published data held on the Council's website was accessed by the Internal Auditor.

1.3 In terms of overall governance, Long Stratton Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan was successfully adopted in September 2021. The aspirations put forward by the community were used to create a 5-year Action Plan (2019 – 2024) to sit beneath the higher-level document. However, the Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Action Plan is now out of date and requires review and update to ensure it assists in facilitating the delivery of the Council's agreed overall strategic objectives.

1.4 By examination of the 2022/23 accounts and supporting documentation it was confirmed that the Clerk, in the role as the Council's RFO, is satisfactorily undertaking the administration of the Council's financial affairs and providing satisfactory financial management information to the Council to enable Councillors to make well-informed decisions. This internal audit review confirmed that the Council's overall governance arrangements and internal control framework remains effective and are being supported satisfactorily by the Clerk/RFO.

1.5 Details of the work completed under the Interim Internal Audit review and the recommendations put forward are recorded below.

2. Governance, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other Regulatory matters (examination of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Formal Policies and Procedures, Tenders where relevant. Acting within the legal framework, including Data Protection legislation).

2.1 The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 9 May 2022, within the required timescale. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972. The Council agreed the structure and membership of its Committees. The Council delegated to the Committees the ability to determine their own Terms of Reference and their Chairmen.

2.2 The Council is using a **Neighbourhood Plan** as an overarching strategic planning document. The adoption of the Plan was a significant development in the Council's overall planning and governance arrangements. The Plan covers the entirety of the parish of Long Stratton and part of the parish of Tharston with an intended lifespan to 2036. Comprehensive details of the Plan have been published on the Council's website.

2.3 A **5-year Action Plan** (2019 – 2024) is also in place, reflecting the aspirations put forward by the community. However, the Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Action Plan (which has not been published on the Council's website) is now out-of-date and requires review.

Recommendation 1: The Council should review and update the Action Plan as soon as practicably possible to ensure that it acts as a current, dynamic document, subject to regular review in order to facilitate the delivery of the agreed overall strategic objectives.

2.4 The Council is continuing to apply the **General Power of Competence (GPoC)** having declared at its meeting on 19 May 2019 that it was an eligible Council to use GPoC, having met the criteria of at least two-thirds elected Councillors and having a suitably qualified Clerk who has completed the relevant training and holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

2.5 The **Minutes of the meetings of the Council and the Committees** are well presented and provide clear evidence of the decisions taken by the Council and its Committees.

2.6 The Council approved a **Scheme of Delegation** at its meeting on 19 July 2021 following a review and recommendation for approval from the Finance and Policy Management Committee. This Scheme of Delegation replaced the scheme previously approved by the Council on 23 March 2020, when appropriate delegated authority was given to the Clerk/RFO, the Chairman and Vice Chairman to deal with urgent and necessary business during the pandemic whilst the Council was unable to meet in person.

2.7 **Standing Orders** are in place and are based on the model documents published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The Finance and Policy

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Management Committee reviewed the Standing Orders on 28 March 2022 and the Council confirmed its formal adoption at its meeting on 11 April 2022.

2.8 **Financial Regulations** are also in place. The Council adopted Financial Regulations at its meeting on 11 April 2022 following a recommendation from the Finance and Policy Management Committee.

2.9 The Council appointed a Councillor Internal Scrutineer for the 2022/23 year at the meeting held on 9 May 2022.

2.10 The Council is **registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)** as a Fee Payer/Data Controller for the provision of council services under Data Protection legislation (Registration Z6523417 refers, expiring 11 April 2023). The Council's Standing Orders (Item 21a) provide that the Proper Officer (the Clerk/RFO) is the Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO). The role and responsibilities of the DPO are built into the Clerk/RFO's job description. Whilst there is no legal requirement for a local council to appoint a DPO, the Council has demonstrated good practice by making such an appointment.

2.11 The Council's Data Protection Registration details are listed on the ICO webpage: <https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Entry/Z6523417>. This displays a contact address of the former Council offices in The Street, under the heading of Long Stratton Parish Council.

Recommendation 2: The Information Commissioner's Office should be advised of the Council's correct name and contact address in order that any enquiries regarding data protection matters can be routed correctly to the Council's Clerk/RFO.

2.12 The Council demonstrates good practice by maintaining a wide range of formal **Policies, Procedures and Protocols** including those for Co-Option, CCTV, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy and a Data Protection Privacy Notice.

2.13 Other Policies and Procedures in place include a Grant Awarding Policy, Grant and Funding Receiving Policy and a Health and Safety Policy. These documents have been published on the Council's website. A Co-option Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2022.

2.14 In addition, the Council has formally adopted a number of Staffing Policies and Procedures including a Training and Development Policy and a Lone Working Policy. During the year 2020/21 the Council formally adopted further Staffing Policies including a Harassment and Bullying Policy, Disciplinary Policy and a comprehensive Staff Handbook.

Recommendation 3:

(a) The Council has a Complaints Procedure in place but it has not been published on the Council's website. Publication of the procedure is important in order that residents are made aware of the arrangements available to them to put forward compliments or complaints.

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TREVOR BROWN CPFA
Internal Audit Services
Charnwood, California, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4DE
Tel: 01394 384698 or 07587 523764
Email: tcdbrown01@yahoo.co.uk

(b) The Council's Data Protection Privacy Notice requires updating as the published document refers to September 2018 as the due date for review and includes the name of a former Chairman of the Council.

2.15 At its meeting on 26 April 2022 the Leisure and Pavilion Committee recommended to Council a Booking Policy, Terms and Conditions of Hire and a Key Policy, all of which were adopted by the Council on 9 May 2022.

2.16 The Internal Auditor discussed with the Clerk/RFO the procedure for reviewing and up-dating Policies and Procedures. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Council now has a Schedule for review of adopted documents. **It is important that robust arrangements are in place to ensure a structured, programmed review of policies, that none are overlooked and all continue to be kept up-to-date and fit for purpose and suitably published on the Council's website.**

2.17 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that a Code of Conduct for Councillors is being observed by the Council. The Code was reviewed and agreed by the Finance and Policy Management Committee on 28 March 2022 and approved by Full Council on 11 April 2022.

2.18 A Website Accessibility Statement has been published on the Council's website to assist with compliance with the Website Accessibility Regulations.

3. Accounting Procedures and Proper Book-keeping (*examination of entries in the Cashbook, regular reconciliations, supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts and VAT accounting*).

3.1 The **Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) system** maintains the Council's Income and Expenditure accounting system. The accounting information is well referenced and provides an audit trail to the supporting documentation. The data recorded provides good evidence in support of the income and expenditure in the 2022/23 year. Comprehensive financial reports can be produced from the RBS system, both for internal use by staff and for formal presentation to Councillors.

3.2 The Clerk/RFO is the designated RBS system administrator having principal access to all functions. The Clerk/RFO continues to access and operate all elements of the system, make necessary up-dates, generate reports and achieve regular reconciliations between the Accounts and the Bank Statements.

3.3. Currently the Administrative Assistant are not users of the RBS system. The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that work is underway to provide the Assistants with suitable access to enable them to support her in entering data onto the system and undertaking other routine system tasks.

3.4 **VAT payments** are tracked and identified within the RBS Cashbook and are being used for reclaims to HMRC. The position regarding re-claims for VAT paid was confirmed to be as follows:

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- a) The 2021/22 Quarter 4 re-claim for the £8,085.88 net VAT paid from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022 was received at bank on 14 April 2022.
- b) The 2022/23 Quarter 1 re-claim for the £5,477.11 net VAT paid from 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 was received at bank on 25 July 2022.
- c) The 2022/23 Quarter 2 re-claim for the £2,561.14 net VAT paid for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022 was received at bank on 18 October 2022.

3.5 The Cashbook Payments List and the Receipts List for the 2022/23 year are well referenced under the RBS accounting system and overall provide good evidence in support of the income and expenditure in the year.

3.6 The **Payments system** was tested during this Interim Internal Audit by means of examination of a sample of transactions covering payments made in the period April 2022 to October 2022. The transactions examined were in order with supporting invoices and vouchers in place.

3.7 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the internal control framework that has applied in the year 2022/23 provided that two Councillors sign each invoice paid by BACS or cheque. Credit card payments are spot-checked by the Councillor Scrutineer. A list of payments and receipts is presented to the Council at each meeting and signed by the Chairman. Direct debit payments are authorised annually. However, the Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that the procedures are shortly to be changed to provide that each payment can be authorised by the Clerk/RFO plus one Administrative Officer plus one Councillor. **It is important that any changes to payment procedures are formally approved by the Council and reflected in revisions/updates to the Council's Financial Regulations.**

3.8 The **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Report** for the year ended 31 March 2022 shows £3,404.09 brought forward at the end of previous year (31 March 2021), CIL receipts and CIL payments in the year were Nil and accordingly the balance of £3,404.09 is displayed as retained as at 31 March 2022. The Annual Report has to be published on the Council's website and has to be submitted to the District Council no later than 31 December 2022.

4. Bank Reconciliation (*Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements*).

4.1 The Council continues to use **Unity Trust Bank** for its banking requirements and internet banking arrangements. At the meeting on 13 December 2021 the Council resolved that all Councillors should be asked to be Signatories for the Unity Trust Bank Accounts.

4.2 The Council has a Councillor Scrutineer in place to confirm the accuracy of the Bank Reconciliation statements.

4.3 At the Finance and Policy Management Committee's meeting on 17 October 2022, Councillors confirmed the accuracy of the Bank Reconciliations for the operational account and the savings account for the period April 2022 to September 2022 (the Committee had not previously met since 25 April 2022). The

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TREVOR BROWN CPFA
Internal Audit Services
Charnwood, California, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4DE
Tel: 01394 384698 or 07587 523764
Email: tcdbrown01@yahoo.co.uk

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Reconciliations were checked by two Councillors who signed the documents to confirm their accuracy. **Bank Reconciliations are an extremely important element of financial control within a local council and it is important that the Council or the Finance and Policy Management Committee and the designated Councillor Scrutineer receive a completed, up-to-date reconciliation for confirmation of accuracy as soon as possible after the date of the reconciliation.**

4.4 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Bank Reconciliations for the period ending 31 October 2022 are due to be presented to the Finance and Policy Management Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2022. The latest available Bank Statements were confirmed by the Internal Auditor as:

Unity Trust (Current Account) as at 31 October 2022: £133,104.83

Unity Trust (Deposit Account) as at 31 October 2022: £146,026.21

The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the most recent statement relating to the NS&I Account was dated 31 December 2021: £46,478.06 (as previously recorded by Internal Audit during the 2021/22 End-of-Year Audit Report).

4.5 At its meeting on 13 December 2021 the Council agreed to open a Public Investment Deposit Fund with CCLA and invest £85,000. On 28 March 2022 the Finance and Policy Management Committee approved the Asset and Investment Policy and resolved to close the NS&I Account. **The closure of the NS&I Account and the opening of the CCLA Investment have yet to take place.**

4.6 The Council has a formal **Asset and Investment Policy** in place. The new Policy was considered by the Finance and Policy Management Committee on 28 March 2022 and adopted by Full Council at its meeting on 11 April 2022. The Policy provides that long-term investments are defined as greater than 12 months and require that should the Council wish to invest for periods greater than 12 months, it must identify procedures for monitoring, assessing and mitigating the risk of loss of invested sums. The Town Council does not currently hold any funds in long-term investments.

4.7 The Asset and Investment Policy has yet to be updated to incorporate a risk assessment of the Council's bank accounts having sums in excess of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit of £85,000.

4.8 The Unity Trust Current Account bank reconciliation as at 31 October 2022 presented to the Internal Auditor displayed the following:

| | £ |
|---|-----------------|
| <i>Confirmed Bank Balance per Unity Account (Statement 86):</i> | 133,104.83 |
| <i>Deduct Unpresented Payments:</i> | 1,898.58 |
| <i>Add Receipts not cleared:</i> | <u>1,200.00</u> |
| <i>Closing Balance per RBS Cashbook</i> | 132,406.25 |

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4.9 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the most recent statement relating to the NSI Account was dated 31 December 2021: £46,478.06 (the account which the Council has since resolved to close).

4.10 The Unity Cash Back Card balance as at 31 October 2022 stood at -£602.23 and had been reconciled to the RBS system by the Clerk/RFO. The amount was due to be collected by direct debit on 16 November 2022.

4.11 The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that the bank reconciliations for the Unity Trust Deposit Account as at 31 October 2022 had not been completed at the time of the audit.

5. Budgetary controls (Verification of the budgetary process with reference to Council Minutes and supporting documents).

Precept 2022/23: £198,094 (13 December 2021, Minute 10 refers).

Precept 2023/24: Budget preparation in progress.

5.1 The **Budget for the current year 2022/23** was presented to the Finance and Policy Management Committee at its meeting on 29 November 2021 and approved by Full Council on 13 December 2021. Following adoption of the Budget the Council looked at the difference between income and expenditure so that an informed decision could be made regarding the Precept to be levied. The Council approved a rise of 8% to £198,094 with the difference being made up from General Reserves.

5.2 At its meeting on 17 October 2022 the Finance and Policy Management Committee considered in detail a **Budget Control/Monitoring Report** for the period April to September 2022 which compared the income and expenditure for 2022/23 (Quarters 1 and 2) with the budget available under each heading. It is good financial practice for Councillors to receive regular reports of the income and expenditure in the year compared against the budget. In this way, Councillors have the opportunity to receive sufficient information and data to make informed decisions and, specifically, will be in a position to identify any significant variations from budget and agree any remedial action.

5.3 The Committee also reviewed Earmarked Reserves at its meeting on 17 October 2022 and agreed that they would be further scrutinised during the 2023/24 budget preparations.

5.4 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that she is making good progress in the construction of a **Draft Budget for 2023/24** which is due to be presented to the meeting of the Finance and Policy Management Committee on 5 December 2022.

5.5 The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with an Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet as at 23 November 2022 and confirmed the overall Reserves available to the Council as £305,603, including Earmarked Reserves of £170,760 as follows:

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TREVOR BROWN CPFA
Internal Audit Services
Charnwood, California, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4DE
Tel: 01394 384698 or 07587 523764
Email: tcdbrown01@yahoo.co.uk

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| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| - Lighting: | £10,000 |
| - Training: | £3,600 |
| - Pavilion: | £628 |
| - MUGA Replacement: | £33,167 |
| - Events: | £500 |
| - Playingfield Emergency: | £32,000 |
| - Land Purchase: | £13,265 |
| - Town Improvements: | £35,000 |
| - Noticeboards: | £3,000 |
| - Swann Lane Toilets: | £39,600 |

5.6 The balance of £134,843 (Overall Reserves less Earmarked Reserves) consisted of £81,405 budgeted expenditure for the remaining part of the 2022/23 year of account and £53,438 as a General Reserve (which is in line with the minimum position that non-earmarked revenue reserves should be at least three months of Net Revenue Expenditure - the JPAG Proper Practices Guide, Item 5.33 refers).

5.7 As at the date of this audit report the Council maintained sufficient overall reserves and contingency sums to meet, within reason, any unforeseen items of expense that may occur.

6. Internal Financial Controls, Payments Controls and Audit Procedures (Confirmation that the Council has satisfactory internal financial controls in place for making payments with adequate documentation to support/evidence payments made. Identifying VAT payments and re-claims. Any previous audit recommendations implemented).

6.1 The Clerk/RFO ensures that Councillors are provided with comprehensive financial information and advice to enable them to make informed decisions.

6.2 Financial Regulations item 5.2 provide that '*A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the Minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove any personal information*'.

6.3 The Council has a standing agenda item of 'Finance and Governance' under which the Clerk/RFO presents **Financial Matters including Income and Expenditure Reports and the Council's approval to receipts and payments**. The Council receives and formally approves a list of the receipts and payments since the previous meeting. The Chairman signs the payment lists (including those for credit card payments) for the Council's record purposes.

6.4 The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 provides that a parish/town council which has gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeding £200,000 must publish (inter alia) details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £500. This includes items such as individual invoices, grant payments, expense payments and payments for goods and services. Individual

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salary payments are not to be included. Publication should be made Quarterly and, on each occasion, not later than one month after the Quarter to which the data and information refers.

6.5 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the data relating to payments made are attached to the published Agenda of the Council meetings or separately published on the Council's website in order to comply with Financial Regulations and to meet the Transparency Code requirements during the 2022/23 year of account.

6.6 The End of Year Internal Audit Report for 2021/22 and the recommendations put forward were considered by the Finance and Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 and reported to Full Council on 9 May 2022. **The progress in meeting the recommendations agreed by the Council is detailed in Appendix A at the end of this Report.**

6.7 The Council formally appointed the Internal Auditor for the 2022/23 year at its meeting on 3 October 2022. The Internal Auditor was directed to undertake two internal audit reviews in the financial year, this Interim Review and an End-of-Year Review in April/May 2023.

7. Payroll Controls (PAYE and NIC in place; compliant with HMRC procedures; records relating to contracts of employment).

7.1 The Council's **Payroll Services** are being operated in house. The Clerk/RFO informed the Internal Auditor that all Council staff have formal Contracts of Employment in place.

7.2 The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the annual staff appraisals had commenced. The Appraisals for the Direct Service Officer and the Administrative Assistant (SCP 7) had taken place in the year and the results reported to the Staffing Committee on 7 November 2022. The annual appraisals for the Clerk/RFO and the Administrative Assistant (SCP 8) are due to take place in December 2022/January 2023.

7.3 The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with the details of the salary payments to staff from April 2022 to November 2022. The salary payments for the month of November 2022 included the back pay owed to staff under the Local Government Officers' Pay Award as from 1 April 2022. A sample of the wage/salary payments made to staff was examined and confirmed the following:

- a) **Clerk/RFO.** From 1 April 2022 the Clerk/RFO was being paid at NJC Scale Point 44. The Council noted on 7 February 2022 the Clerk/RFO's contractual pay rise. The National Salary Award back dated to 1 April 2022 was included in the Clerk/RFO's November 2022 salary payment.
- b) **Administrative Assistant (NJC SCP 9).** The post has 15 working hours. SCP 9 was paid from 1 April 2022. The National Salary Award back dated to 1 April 2022 was included in the November 2022 salary payment.

- c) **Administration Assistant (NJC SCP 7).** The Administrative Assistant began employment with the Council on 21 February 2022 and was paid for 12 hours per week at the minimum national wage. At its meeting on 27 June 2022 the Staffing Committee resolved that the hours of work should remain at 12 hours per week with overtime available for an additional 3 hours per week at the Clerk/RFO's discretion. The salary was amended from the minimum national wage to NJC SCP 7. The Committee agreed to extend the contract for one year.
- d) **Direct Services Officer (formerly Head Groundsman).** At its meeting on 7 February 2022 the Council agreed to the pay rise to SCP15 with advancement to SCP16 after 6 months satisfactory performance. The Staffing Committee agreed on 7 November 2022 that the salary should increase to SCP 16 from 1 October 2022.
- e) **The Council's Litter Picker.** The position is being paid for 6 hours per week at the current national minimum wage.
- f) **The Pavilion Cleaner.** The position was formally on a zero hours contract at the national minimum wage. The appointment of the current cleaner was ratified by the Staffing Committee on 27 June 2022 and terms and conditions agreed (5 hours per week at NJC SCP 4).

7.4 The Clerk/RFO informed the Staffing Committee on 7 November 2022 that the annual salary award for local government officers had been agreed with increases back dated to 1 April 2022.

7.5 In terms of the requirements under the **Workplace Pensions legislation**, the Clerk/RFO confirmed that the necessary re-declaration to the Pensions Regulator was completed on 21 January 2020. (The re-declaration of compliance confirms to the Pensions Regulator that the Council complies with its duties as an employer and has to be completed every three years).

8. Petty Cash and the Use of Credit Cards (*Associated books and formally agreed systems in place*).

8.1 At its meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council approved the opening of a Petty Cash Account of £300 and a Petty Cash Policy and Procedure document which included (inter alia) the following requirements:

- a) Petty Cash counting must be carried out and recorded monthly and signed by one officer and one Councillor.
- b) Petty Cash cashbook reconciliations must be carried out monthly and reviewed by the Finance and Policy Management Committee no less than Quarterly.
- c) The Petty Cash records and receipts are to be spot checked by the Councillor Scrutineer.

8.2 The Petty Cash Account and Credit Card reconciliations were checked and signed by two Councillors at the Finance and Management Committee meeting on 17 October 2022.

8.3 The Internal Auditor met Councillor Robert Mackenzie (Councillor Scrutineer) during the audit visit on 23 November 2022. Councillor Mackenzie confirmed that appropriate random checks are being undertaken within a range of the Council's financial activities/operations including petty cash items.

8.4 Receipts against which sums are drawn from the Petty Cash Account are being retained by the Clerk/RFO.

8.5 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Petty Cash Account had a 'nil' balance held at the time of the audit visit. The Petty Cash records are being maintained electronically within the RBS system.

8.6 The Council's Financial Regulations (approved on 22 March 2022, prior to the opening of a Petty Cash Account) states at item 5.8 that 'The council will not maintain any form of cash float'.

8.7 The Petty Cash Policy adopted on 9 May 2022 by the Council requires review as the Policy states at item 1.1 that 'The total amount of petty cash held at any one time is to be a maximum of £200'

Recommendation 4:

(a) The Council's Financial Regulations require updating to reflect that a Petty Cash Account is held. The Regulations should include the key controls to be maintained over the operation of the Account.

(b) The Petty Cash Policy requires correction to reflect that the Petty Cash Account approved was £300 and to amend the maximum amount that can be held at any one time.

8.8 The operation of the Petty Cash System, including the findings of the spot checks undertaken by the Councillor Scrutineer during the year, will be examined at the End-of-Year Internal Audit in order that appropriate certification can be given in the Annual Internal Audit Report within the 2022/23 AGAR.

8.9 Lloyds Bank Corporate Credit Cards are used by the Clerk/RFO and the Direct Services Officer and an Administrative Assistant as follows:

Clerk/RFO: Individual Spending Limit increased to £3,000 w.e.f. 1 February 2022

Direct Services Officer: Individual Spending Limit increased to £500 w.e.f. 1 February 2022

Administrative Officer: Approved by Council on 13 December 2021, individual spending limit set at £250 w.e.f. 1 February 2022

8.10 The overall corporate spending limit was increased to £3,750 to cover the limits on all 3 cards. Settlement of the outstanding amount is made in full by monthly direct debit.

8.11 Financial Regulations item 5.7 states that '*Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk*

[and RFO] and head groundsman and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end'.

8.12 There are no formal written instructions in place to detail how the cards shall be managed or kept secure in the interests of the Council or to detail any limitations in their use, including limits on the amount of any one payment, and the responsibilities of all parties in the use of the cards.

Recommendation 5:

- (a) Whilst the Council's Financial Regulations make reference to the use of the Credit Card, formal written instructions for the operation of the Credit Card should be constructed (similar to those in place for the Petty Cash Account), approved by the Council and issued to the relevant staff in order to protect both the interests of the Council and the staff members using the cards.**
- (b) Financial Regulations item 5.7 should be brought up-to-date and expanded to clearly reflect the current arrangements in place for the operation of the Credit Cards by 3 members of staff.**

9. Income Controls (regarding sums received from Precept, Grants, Loans and other income including credit control mechanisms).

9.1 **The Receipts system** is operated within the RBS Accounting System. There is a clear audit trail from the income recorded in the RBS system to bank account statements. A sample of income items was examined with reference to the bank statements and was found to be in order.

9.2 Receipts are reported to Council meetings under the standing agenda item of 'Finance and Governance'. The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with details of the Receipts recorded in the RBS system for the Unity (Current) Account between 1 April 2022 and 23 November 2022. The total of £242,701.50 (excluding transfers between the Council's bank accounts) consisted of:

Precept (£198,094)
VAT Refunds (£16,124.13)
CIL Receipts (£5,670.76)
Lottery Grant (£10,000)
Grant from Saffron Housing (£5,000)
Pavilion Hirers (£2,923.50)
Long Stratton Football Club (£1,808.50)
Land Rents (£753.56)
Event income/donations (£2,202.05)
Other/Misc. items (£125.00)

9.3 Any interest income received in the Unity (Savings) Account between 1 April 2022 and 31 October 2022 has yet to be recorded in the RBS Nominal Ledger and the Account has yet to be reconciled to the bank statements.

Interim Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2022/23)

9.4 The Clerk/RFO advised that the Council's Fees and Charges were last considered and agreed by the Council at the meeting held on 13 September 2021. The fees for individual and corporate bookings for the Community Room were agreed. Similarly, the Season Fees and Container fees for LSFC were agreed together with the terms and conditions for regular users and one-off users. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Council would be receiving 20% of the donations received by the Warm Hub initiative at the Community Room.

9.5 The Debtors Outstanding recorded as at 23 November 2022 included the £908.63 VAT due for future re-claim as detailed in the VAT Control Account in the RBS Nominal Ledger Report.

9.6 The Lists of Debtors will be examined in detail by the Internal Auditor during the End of Year Internal Audit in 2022 as part of the work to verify the accounting entries included in the AGAR 2022/23.

10. Internal Control and the Management of Risk (*Review by the Council of the effectiveness of internal controls, including risk assessment, and Minuted accordingly*).

10.1 An **Internal Control Policy** is in place having been formally approved and adopted by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2022. A copy has been published on the Council's website. The Finance and Policy Management Committee appointed a Councillor Internal Scrutineer at its meeting on 29 November 2021, in accordance with the Council's Internal Control Policy, to routinely examine and report upon the Council's Internal Control arrangements.

10.2 On 23 November 2022 the Internal Auditor met Councillor Mackenzie, the Council's appointed Internal Scrutineer, and discussed the scope of the scrutiny work that was being undertaken on a Quarterly basis. The work undertaken by the Councillor Scrutineer can assist in the Council meeting its internal control responsibilities including informing the Council's completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) each year.

10.3 The arrangements in place for the independent examination by the Councillor Scrutineer include a check list from which the Scrutineer can undertake a review of the system of internal controls, complete spot checks and sign a report in confirmation that the review has been undertaken. At its meeting on 17 October 2022 the Finance and Policy Management Committee received the Scrutineer's Report which was noted and approved by the Committee.

10.4 **Risk Assessment documents** are in place and include a Financial Risk Management document which identifies the risks faced by the Council, the status of High, Medium or Low and the appropriate measures in place to mitigate the risk identified. The Financial Risk Management document was considered by the Finance and Policy Management Committee on 28 March 2022 and adopted by Full Council at its meeting on 11 April 2022. A copy of the Risk Assessment Policy has been published on the Council's website.

Recommendation 6: In a similar way to the Asset and Investment Policy, the Council's Financial Risk Management document should include identification of the risks attached to the Council's bank accounts having sums in excess of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme limit of £85,000.

10.5 The next overall review of the Internal Control and Risk Assessment documentation by the Council should take place before 31 March 2023. This will ensure compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require a review by the Full Council at least once each financial year of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, including the arrangements for the management of risk, with the review suitably Minuted.

10.6 An important area of risk management within local councils concerns the adequate maintenance of play equipment. In this respect, a RoSPA Inspection of the play equipment at Manor Road Playing Fields by the Play Inspection Company Ltd. was undertaken on 20 September 2022. The formal report received was emailed by the Clerk/RFO to all Councillors on 26 September 2022 but has yet to be formally put forward to Full Council. The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that new playground equipment is being planned to be installed under a phased programme at a total cost of approximately £80,000. Grants have already been secured from the National Lottery (£10,000) and Saffron Housing (£5,000) to assist with the project.

10.7 **Insurance** cover is in place. At its meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council noted that the renewal date was 1 June 2022 and delegated to the Clerk/RFO and the Chairman the duty of appointing an insurance provider from that date. On 13 June 2022 the Council agreed and ratified the decision by the Clerk/RFO and the Chairman to remain with Gallagher Insurance for the year to 31 May 2023. The insurance premium of £4,080.63 was paid on 13 June 2022. Employer's Liability cover and Public Liability cover each stand at £10m. The Fidelity Guarantee (Employee and Councillor Dishonesty) cover stands at £375,000 and meets the current recommended guidelines which provide that the cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants.

10.8 In meeting its Risk Management responsibilities, the Council approved a Health and Safety Policy at its meeting on 19 July 2021 following review and recommendation for approval from the Finance and Policy Management Committee. **The Health and Safety Policy is comprehensive but only a draft copy has been published on the Council's website and the final agreed copy should be published as soon as practicably possible.**

10.9 At the meeting held on 11 October 2021 the Council demonstrated good risk management practice by setting up an Emergency Plan Working Group to facilitate the construction of a Community Emergency Plan to assist in the well-being of the local community. The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that an Administrative Assistant is currently working on the Plan but an initial meeting of the Working Group has yet to be arranged.

11. Assets Controls (*Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets; recording of fixed asset valuations; cross checking on insurance cover*).

11.1 A stand-alone **Asset Register** is in place, being maintained on an Excel spreadsheet. The Register is not as yet supported by the RBS Accounting System but the Clerk/RFO confirmed that when resources allow the Council intends to integrate the Asset Register into the RBS Accounting System to maintain the records and to make all necessary updates.

11.2 The Clerk/RFO advised that the Asset Register currently remains unchanged from the position as at 31 March 2022 but a stocktake is shortly due and the Register will be reviewed and up-dated at that time.

11.3 The Register will be reviewed in detail by the Internal Auditor at the End-of-Year Audit in 2023 to confirm that it complies with current requirements (which provide that each asset should be recorded on a consistent basis, year-on-year) and in order that appropriate certification can be made in the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR for the year 2022/23.

11.4 The Clerk/RFO has previously confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the Council does not maintain any documents relating to 'Assets of Community Value' (listing assets upon which the Council has first option to purchase should the assets enter the sale market).

12. External Audit (*Recommendations put forward or comments made following the annual review*).

12.1 The **External Audit Report and Certificate** by PKF Littlejohn LLP for the year 2020/21 was dated 3 September 2022 and raised no issues of concern. The Report noted that the Council has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 2 but it had provided an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address the weaknesses identified. This was consistent with the Annual Internal Audit Report.

12.2 The Report and Certificate was reported to the Council at its meeting on 3 October 2022. The External Audit Certificate (Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) has been published on the Council's website.

13. Publication Requirements.

13.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 authorities must publish each year the following information on a publicly accessible website:
To be published by 1 July 2022:

Notice of the period for the exercise of Public Rights
AGAR - Sections 1 and 2

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The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the documents in respect of the year 2021/22 had been published and were readily accessible on the Council's website:

<https://www.longstrattoncouncil.info/documents>

13.2 However, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to publish a formal 'Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance and Accountability Return' on the website. A notice had been published on the Council's website and displayed the inspection dates but the notice was for use solely for advising the External Auditors of the information and not for publication on the website. The form published was not the official form specifically designed for publication and which the Council has correctly used in previous years. **The Clerk/RFO has confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the specifically approved form will be used in future to display the Date of the Announcement, Inspection Dates, Details of Person to contact to view the accounts and the Details of the person making the announcement.**

13.3. The items listed below are to be published following completion of the External Audit (and no later than 30 September 2022):

Notice of Conclusion of Audit

AGAR - Section 3

AGAR - Sections 1 and 2 (including any amendments as a result of the Limited Assurance Review).

13.4 The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the documents had been published on the Council's website.

13.5 As reported at items 6.4 and 6.5 above, the Council is currently meeting the publication requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (which provides that larger parish/town councils which have gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeding £200,000 must publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £500).

13.6 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that she intends to improve the presentation of the Council's financial information and data on the website to ensure that it is more easily accessible under distinct headings to locate the AGAR and payments over £500.

14. Additional Comments.

14.1 I would like to record my appreciation to Mrs Becky Buck, the Clerk/RFO, for her assistance during the course of this Interim Internal Audit Review work.

Trevor Brown

**Trevor Brown, CPFA
Internal Auditor**

24 November 2022

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**TREVOR BROWN CPFA
Internal Audit Services
Charnwood, California, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4DE
Tel: 01394 384698 or 07587 523764
Email: tcdbrown01@yahoo.co.uk**

Appendix A

Progress being achieved in addressing the Recommendations in the 2021/22 End of Year Internal Audit Report dated 4 May 2022.

Recommendation 1: The Asset and Investment Policy should provide guidance on the Council's approach to the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and the Scheme's application to the Town Council. The Policy should include guidance on spreading financial risks and securing maximum protection for the Council under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Update at 23 November 2022: *The Clerk/RFO advised the Finance & Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 that the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) covers bank accounts up to £85,000 which currently the Council was in excess of. The Clerk/RFO explained that the Council will be taking some steps to mitigate this with the opening an account with CCLA. The Committee agreed to recommend to Council that the Asset and Investment Policy should be amended to incorporate a risk assessment of the Council's bank accounts having sums in excess of £85,000. The amendment has yet to be completed.*

Recommendation 2: Whilst the Council maintains sufficient overall reserves to meet, within reason, any unforeseen items of expense that may occur, the amount of General Reserves require review during 2022/23 in order to ensure that amounts held are more in line with the JPAG Proper Practices Guide.

Update at 23 November 2022: *The Clerk advised the Finance & Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 that the General Reserves amount stood at £23,254 and to comply with JPAG Proper Practices Guide it should as a minimum stand at £53,755. The Committee agreed to recommend to Council that some appropriate Earmarked Reserves should be moved to General Reserves. At its meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council agreed to move £30,000 from the Town Improvement Fund to General Reserves to comply with best practice in the level of General Reserves to be held. The Clerk/RFO has made the adjustment to the RBS Accounts.*

Recommendation 3: The Council should each year comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require a review by the Full Council at least once each financial year of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, including the arrangements for management of risk, with the review suitably entered into the Minutes of the Council meeting.

Update at 23 November 2022: *The Clerk advised the Finance & Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 that the Internal Control Policy had not been reviewed during the year 2021/22 and that the Policy was on May's Full Council*

Interim Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2022/23)

agenda for review. The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the full review of Internal Control and Risk Management arrangements will be undertaken during the year 2022/23 before the end of March 2023.

Recommendation 4: The arrangements in place for the independent examination by the Councillor Internal Control Scrutineer should include a check list from which the Scrutineer can undertake a review of the system of internal controls, complete all necessary checks and sign a report in confirmation that the review has been undertaken.

***Update at 23 November 2022:** This is being met. The Clerk advised the Finance & Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 that Councillor Mackenzie is the Council's internal Scrutineer, that he had met with the internal auditor on 22 April 2022 and that the first scrutineer check would take place on 29 April 2022. At its meeting on 17 October 2022 the Committee received the Internal Scrutineer's Report which was noted and approved by the Committee. The Internal Scrutineer met the Internal Auditor on 23 November 2022 to discuss the review procedures in place and provided the Internal Auditor with a copy of the completed check list detailing the inspections carried out during the Quarter ending 30 September 2022.*

Recommendation 5: The Council should re-examine the movement of assets in the year to confirm that the correct value of Assets as at 31 March 2022 is placed in Box 9 of the AGAR (Annual Return) for 2021/22.

***Update at 23 November 2022:** This was addressed. The Clerk/RFO advised the Finance & Policy Management Committee on 25 April 2022 that at the time of the internal audit there was a discrepancy of £3,235 between movements within the Council's assets during the financial year but subsequent to the audit she had identified the discrepancy and accounted for the amount and evidenced this to the Committee.*

We write further to our previous letter relating to the proposed closure of the churchyard at St Mary's Church, Long Stratton.

The position of the Town Council remains that it objects to the closure of the churchyard being sought by Order in Council under the Burial Act 1853.

The Town Council believe that there should be a high threshold for a closure to be made and will be raising objections with the Ministry of Justice, in due course. Prior to this, we are requesting the PCC look afresh at this issue with the hope of an alternative resolution whilst a permanent solution for greater burial space is also considered.

From the site meeting between South Norfolk District Council and Steve Dugdale on 14th November 2022, we understand that the PCC did not know how many graves could be reused under the 75-year provision, nor had any survey taken place to establish the number of vacant or unmarked graves within the churchyard. We further understand that the PCC do not wish to rebury under the 75-year provision and that currently every time a new grave is currently being dug there is some concern an existing grave may be found.

The PCC will be aware that Mark Hill QC found that such an Order in Council would only be granted "after a full investigation as to whether any parts of it already used for burial may be reused" (Ecclesiastical Law 4th Ed.). We would ask the PCC to also consider the assessment made in *St Peter, Terwick [2017] ECC Chi 2*

"[the petitioners] have recognised in timely manner that the available space for burial is diminishing. They have rejected the soft option of having the burial ground declared full thereby passing the obligation onto the local authority. They have thought reasonably about what it means to be an established church in the twenty-first century at grass roots level, making provision for the entire community...[and] They commissioned a specialist ground penetrating radar survey...Parishes elsewhere should not be deterred by the need to 'lift and deepen' or to re-position memorials"

We would suggest this sets out a framework by which churchyards *should* be managed, as not to prejudice the right of burial for parishioners.

During the 14th November 2022 meeting, Mr Dugdale also explained that the recent maintenance of the churchyard had been poor and that the contract had recently ended. Legal opinion concerning the Church of England explains that an Order in Council has never been made for the sole purpose of relieving the ecclesiastical authorities of the burden of maintaining a churchyard. As there has been no adequate investigation into whether further burials can take place, we would argue that the closure is being progressed to relieve the burden of maintenance. We also believe that in all the circumstances, closure would be the *soft option* and that the well-established alternatives would better serve the community.

The Town Council has enjoyed a good relationship with the church, and we hope this matter can be reviewed again to the benefit of all those parishioners in Stratton St. Mary.

Becky Buck

From: Joanna Kitchener <Joanna.Kitchener@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>
Sent: 14 December 2022 14:47
To: Long Stratton Town Council
Subject: Outdoor Table Tennis Table

Categories: Becky

Dear Becky

As of course you will be aware, South Norfolk Council is moving to the Horizon building and selling the House. As equally I expect you know, there is an outdoor table tennis table located on the front lawn of the House and we need to find a new home for it.

Just as a bit of background, this was a national initiative by Ping! Who bought the tables, and then SNC adopted the table.

We were just wondering whether the Town Council might be willing to adopt it at no cost, and find a suitable home for it somewhere in Long Stratton – easier would of course be on a piece of land you already own.

What do you think? If you would like to find out a little bit more about it, just let me know and Dan Goodwin, our Communities Manager will happily take you through any details.

There is no urgency, and I expect you may wish to discuss this at a meeting, so please come back to me at your convenience.

Kind regards.

Joanna Kitchener
HR Business Partner (Resources and I&F)
t 01508 533973 e joanna.kitchener@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk



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Becky Buck

From: Jamie Henry <Jamie.Henry@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 December 2022 17:21
To: Steve Dugdale; Long Stratton Town Council
Cc: Alison Thomas; Chrissy Briggs; Paul Adams
Subject: update on SNDC position
Attachments: 20449 - St Marys Church, Long Stratton.pdf

Good afternoon everybody,

I just wished to update on our current position;

I met with Steve on site last week with a view to identify potential vacant burial plots at the churchyard using the 2016 burial plan. We agreed that space is very limited but it would be beneficial if we could identify enough vacant plots to allow burials to continue for another two or three years. This should allow enough time to secure additional burial provision in the parish. Burial records for the last 6 years show that there have been on average 4.3 burials/year (26 burials).

By cross checking in situ against the burial plan we identified a number of small areas that are potentially vacant. I have approached a company that undertakes ground penetrating radar surveys in churchyards and they have provided a quote to survey these areas. We will look to undertake this survey in January. Please see quote attached. We would welcome a contribution towards the cost of the survey from the PCC and Town Council.

I will let you know once we have a survey date.

Best wishes,
Jamie

GPR Survey

20th December 2022

Customer details
Jamie Henry

St Mary's Church,
Long Stratton,
Norwich,
NR15 2RL

Quote number 20449

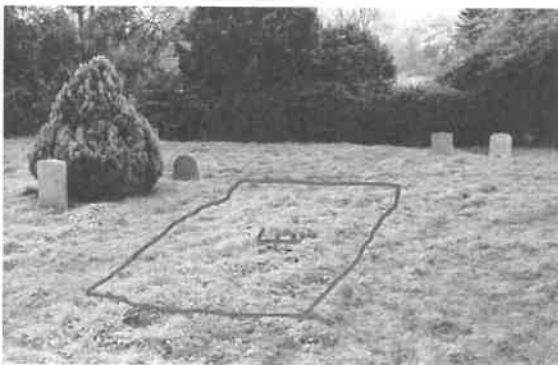
Summary

Quotation to perform a survey using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to identify any unmarked graves at St Mary's Church, 2 Hall Ln, Long Stratton, Norwich NR15 2RL.

Location and survey boundary

The survey will be performed as highlighted in the images below, provided by the client. It should be noted that the survey area should be as clear of obstructions if possible.







Survey procedure

The survey would be performed by accessing the survey area and collecting GPR data using a medium frequency antenna. The surveyor will scan the ground and data will be analysed whilst on site. Any findings will be recorded using a GPS and the data will be saved and returned to our offices.

Deliverables

Saved data will be processed to reproduce a drawing of any identified graves. The graves will be given a grading to categorise how visible and confident we are of their presence.

The drawing will be supplemented with a written report.

Requirements

We will require unrestricted access to the surfaces to be scanned, with any long grass or vegetation cut down prior to our arrival.

It is preferable if there are not significant other works taking place on site at the same time as the survey. If other works are going to be taking place, please do inform us so that we can ensure they do not impede the survey process or impact on the health and safety of KB GPR staff.

Restrictions / Limitations

GPR collects data about the material directly beneath it and has no capacity to 'look sideways', in the case of obstructions the GPR will scan up to, and on the other side of the obstruction, but the area beneath it and immediately around it (from the edge of the obstruction to the centre of the GPR) will be missed.

GPR is designed to be in direct contact with the surface being surveyed. If the GPR needs to be raised to pass over obstructions, it can reduce the performance of the GPR or block the signal if



there is a significant air gap. It can also reduce the performance if an uneven surface forces the GPR to be raised or slip across the surface.

GPR performance varies depending on the material being surveyed. All GPR surveys are subject to our disclaimer, please see our website for the full text.

Price

The survey will take place over 1no. of day shifts.

Our price £2,380.00 +VAT.

Availability and lead time

Our typical lead time is 10 days from the date of instruction.

Issue of results

Results are issued approximately 10 days after the site visit.

Payment terms

Invoice issued after delivery of results, payment within 30 days from date of invoice.

Becky Buck

From: Nathan Harris <Nathan.Harris@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 December 2022 15:31
To: Long Stratton Town Council
Subject: Long Stratton - Ordinary water course review and flood awareness/preparedness project

Importance: High

Categories: Becky

Dear Becky,

As you may be aware South Norfolk & Broadland District Council are in the process of starting a project across the two districts which is looking to help identify flood risk down to parish/town council level. This is going to be achieved through:

- The mapping of ordinary water courses,
- Mapping the areas of known & potential risk,
- Asset mapping,
- Potential maintenance regime development and
- Identifying ways residents can be resilient

all ideally culminating in the co-development of a Town/Parish level Surface Water Management Plan.

The project is very much in its infancy and at a development stage so may change in structure as things progress. To date a list of 12 priority locations has been generated, predominately based on reports of internal flooding to property. Long Stratton is forth on the list for the recorded number of internally flooded properties with 22, along with 9 recorded instances of external flooding, please note these figures may not take into account incidences that haven't been reported to the Lead Local Flood Authority.

The intention is that the Surface Water Management Plan will be owned by the Town Council and be produced in close partnership with us, we will provide overlying guidance, report structures, technical guidance and support with the mapping process. Initially I am looking to gauge interest from the 12 priority parishes with a view to holding a scoping meeting in the new year to discuss this project further and ascertain how we can work together to minimise the risk of flooding and mitigate any residual risk as far as possible.

If this is something Long Stratton Council would like to be a part of I would very much look forward to working with you.

Kind regards

Nathan Harris (He/Him)
Flood & Water Management Officer
t 01508 505254 e nathan.harris@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk



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Becky Buck

From: Jan D'Arcy <jandarcy@talktalk.net>
Sent: 09 January 2023 13:57
To: Long Stratton Town Council
Subject: Asset of Community Value

Categories: Becky

Please find attached a copy of a letter sent to David Disney requesting support for considering the Methodist Church Site in Long Stratton as an Asset of Community Value. I am acting on behalf of Mr Brian Webb to try to develop a Community Hub for various activities on an ongoing basis.

Norfolk Council have suggested we contact yourselves in respect of this.

Please see attached enquiry and response.

Kind regards

Jan D'Arcy
Enc:

Dear Jan

David Disney has today forwarded your e-mail to me with regards to Mens Sheds and Assets of Community value, this area of work falls within the Communities team here at South Norfolk and Broadland.

Let me try and assist you and take each area in turn!

Redenhall – Church Close. You mention that this piece of land is owned by the Council is this District or Parish/Town Council?

There is already a Mens Shed being formed in Harleston and will be situated within the grounds of the fire station, this is being set up by a local group who are working alongside Norfolk County Council (as they own the land on which it will be sited). As well as Harleston, just down the road in Earsham at the Wetland centre there is Ditchingham Mens Shed, to have another so very close to both of these may not be viable, although a survey sent to the residents of Redenhall may show different.

You Mention in your e-mail a community hub being on the land, what sort of hub were you thinking of, would it be similar to Harleston Information Plus which acts as a hub for the Town and surrounding villages <https://harleston-norfolk.org.uk/> A discussion with our planning team to see if this land is a viable space that may get planning permission would also be a good starting point.

With regards to the land being an Asset of Community value, I attach the link for both you and Mr Webb to look at to see if the land meets the criteria, I have worked with Mr Webb before and he has previously received hard copies of the Asset of Community value information, hopefully he still has this (if not I can print and send out to him) <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/asset-community-value-right-bid>

Long Stratton – Methodist Church – we look at each Asset of community value on its own merits and the information that is provided to us by the nominating body. If this is nominated by somebody other than those on the list see attached link above, for example if Mr Webb wanted to nominate the building he would need 21 signatories (including his own). If the nomination was successful as and when the building was up for sale then he and the group would be notified. An Asset of Community value doesn't mean that sale can be forced either. Like all buildings if the main use is to be changed a discussion with South Norfolk Planning team would need to be had.

I am unable to discuss the covenants on the Methodist Church building as I don't know what these are.

I have looked at the Long Stratton Neighbourhood plan as on the Town Council website and it does mention new community meeting space in the vicinity of the town centre. Can I suggest speaking with the Town Council clerk to see what there plans may be, has Mr Webb already spoken to the Town Council? Does this mean the new building on the Playingfield.

Please do come back to me should you have any further questions

Kind regards

Julie

Julie Ringer (She/Her)

Communities Officer

t 01508 533642 e julie.ringer@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Dear Mr Disney

I am contacting you on behalf of a colleague, Mr Brian Webb, who is wishing to introduce a Men's Shed or Community Hub to one of two regions within the borough.

The first area he is proposing is a brown field site adjacent to Church Close, Redenhall. This is the area that was flooded in the past and the council has since had a concrete hard standing introduced. There is no building currently in situ but Mr Webb advises me that this location would provide a much needed Community hub to an area that hosts an unusually high percentage of retired voters.

The alternative area proposed is the disused Methodist Church, Manor Road, Long Stratton. We understand that this disused church carries a covenant which would restrict certain usages and therefore would on the face of it appear to provide a suitable location for a Community Hub.

As defined in the Neighbourhood Plan and the council's plans on localism would either of these locations be a likely candidate to be registered as a community asset and developed to provide a Community Hub?

I would appreciate any further guidance you could proffer to help me support Mr Webb in his quest to locate a suitable venue.

Mr Webb advises me that he has made provision in his will to provide ongoing support to this project.

Kind regards
Jan D'Arcy

Sent from my iPad