



Long Stratton Town Council

Pavilion, Manor Road Playing Fields, Manor Road, Long Stratton, NR15 2XR

Chairman: Mr Kevin Worsley. Clerk: Mrs B Buck

Tel: 01508 530524

Email: Becky.buck@longstrattontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.longstrattoncouncil.info

AGENDA AND NOTICE OF MEETING

Councillors are summoned to attend a meeting of Long Stratton Town Council meeting which is to be held on Monday 9th May 2022 at 7pm at the Pavilion, club room.

1. To nominate Chairman for May 2022 up to and including April 2023 for all ordinary and extraordinary meetings of Long Stratton Town Council
2. Chairman to sign 'Chairman's Declaration of Office' in the presence of the Clerk
3. To nominate Vice-Chairman for May 2022 up to and including April 2023 for all ordinary and extraordinary meetings.
4. To receive apologies for absence
5. To receive disclosures of interest and dispensations
6. To allow members of the public and district and county councillors to speak - max 20 Minutes
7. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2021
8. To note the Clerks report.
9. To discuss and decide on Committee members.
 - a. Planning & Highways
 - b. Events
 - c. Leisure & Pavilion
 - d. Staffing Committee & HR policies
 - e. Finance and Policy Management including GDPR
10. To appoint an Internal Scrutineer for 2022-23 financial year
11. Finance and Governance
 - a. To note and authorise income and expenditure through Unity Trust Bank since April 11th 2022
 - b. To note all credit card payments since April 11th 2022
12. To discuss and decide on operating a petty cash
13. To discuss and decide on a petty cash policy.
14. To discuss and decide on the following policies
 - a. Internal Control Policy
 - b. Co-option Policy
15. To note the internal audit report.
16. To discuss and decide on the Annual Governing Account Report (AGAR)
 - a. Annual Governance Statement
 - b. Accounting Statement
17. To discuss and decide on insurance provider
18. To receive updates and make decisions from recommendations from the meeting with Tasburgh PC re. Cycle paths.
19. To note minutes from the following committee meetings and to discuss and decide on recommendations made.
 - a. Finance
 - i. To move EMR into general reserves, option 1, to be taken from Town Improvement Fund, option 2 to have a combination taken from Town Improvement Fund reserves and MUGA improvement reserves.
 - b. Leisure & Pavilion
 - i. Booking Policy
 - ii. Terms and Conditions of Hire
 - iii. Key Policy
 - c. Staffing
20. To note the following meeting dates
 - a. Full Council meeting – 13th June 2022 at 7pm
 - b. Planning & Highways – TBC (There are currently no applications been received.)
 - c. Events – 10th May at 7pm & 23rd May at 7pm
 - d. Meeting with Long Stratton Football Club – May 16th at 7pm (Cllrs, Lunness, Pochin, Woodham, Baker)
21. To close the meeting to press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the disclosure of confidential information (land, contracts, staffing matters)
 22. Staffing matters



Long Stratton Town Council

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11th APRIL @ 7pm IN THE COMMUNITY PAVILION ROOM

In attendance: Councillors Kelly Lunness, (Acting Chair), Judith Baker, Mat Pochin, Diane Woodham, Christina Kenna, Susan Smith, Andrew Lansdell (19:05), Tony Wright & Robert Mackenzie

2 members of the public

District Councillor & County Councillor Alison Thomas

Becky Buck Clerk & RFO

1. To receive applicants for co-option

Anthony Wright put himself forward for co-option, he gave a brief description of himself and answered questions from existing members regarding why he wanted to be a Councillor. The Council agreed to co-opt Mr Wright to the Council. Councillor Wright signed the declaration of office in front of the Clerk and joined the meeting.

2. To receive apologies for absence

Councillor Ridgway gave apologies due to Covid; Councillor Mundford gave apologies due to annual leave.

3. To receive disclosures of interest and dispensations

There were no disclosures of interest or dispensation received.

4. To allow members of the public and district and county councillors to speak - max 20 Minutes

Councillor Thomas advised that the ditch behind Manor Court had now been totally cleared of debris. The 1800 home and bypass planning application is still under consultation. There has been lots of information come forward from the Local Lead Flood Authority including suggestions around applying conditions. There is no date for the application to go to the planning committee at South Norfolk however as there is an upcoming byelection, there may be a small delay due to purdah.

Evacuees from Ukraine are arriving and are being matched. Housing and welfare checks are taking place to ensure basic standards are met and support services are in place.

Accommodation review is coming to conclusion, the Council were asked to give thought to what they would like to see South Norfolk House become. It is no longer being considered as an evacuee centre.

County report. Norfolk County Council are leading the way on supporting evacuees from Ukraine, they have created a central team that is co-ordinating all the support. Free school meals during Easter holidays have been terminated with the funding being allocated in a different way to reach more people that are vulnerable. Easter schemes for children that are running still have food provision available.



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Member of the public raised a query over item 9 as he had previously proposed a pathway be installed to circumvent the whole of Manor Road playing fields. The Council agreed that this would be taken into consideration at the time. He asked the Council what their thoughts were on the accommodation review for South Norfolk Council/ Broadland District Council. The Council commented that until a resolution has been passed by the authorities concerned, the Town Council do not know how it will affect the local community however there was a concern over the loss of economy that having the offices in Long Stratton brings.

5. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2022**

Minutes of the meeting held 14th March were approved with one correction in the District Councillor report. Omitted 'Cygnet House' and replaced with 'South Norfolk House'.

6. **To note the Clerks report and to ask any questions arising from the report.**

The Clerks report was noted. The Clerk gave the Direct Services Officer report verbally.

7. **Financial and Governance items**

a. **To approve and note receipts and payments since 14th March 2022**

Payments totalling £25,527.53 were noted and approved by the Council. Receipted totalling £125 were noted and approved by the Council. It was noted that the electricity bill for the MUGA floodlights was being challenged. Concern was raised regarding the increasing prices of energy especially for the floodlights. The Clerk confirmed the solar lights were due to be replaced with LED lights imminently, it was agreed to place it on the next Finance Committee agenda.

b. **To note credit card payments since 14th March 2022**

Credit card payments totalling £1697.40 were noted by the Council.

c. **To approve 50% contribution for Hayntons Lane maintenance up to £1440.**

Contribution to Hayntons Lane maintenance was approved. The Clerk was asked to inform Wacton Parish Council Clerk that in future years we would require 3 quotes in line with Long Stratton's Financial Regulations. Concern was raised regarding the work being carried out in nesting season. The Clerk was asked to enquire when the work would be carried out.

8. **To discuss and decide on bowls club placing a sign at the entrance of the car park**

Following a lengthy discussion; it was agreed to approve 2 signs no bigger than 36" by 12" to be placed at the entrance of the car park and a smaller sign to be placed on the gate to the bowls club.

9. **To discuss and decide on LSFC request to install floodlights around the bottom pitch.**

Following a lengthy discussion; the Council agreed to decline the request to install flood lights.



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10. To discuss and decide on replacing play equipment on a piecemeal basis.

The Clerk gave a verbal report regarding the funding that is available for capital programmes such as playground equipment. There are some funding options, some centred around the Queen's platinum jubilee, and for smaller sums of money therefore to replace the playground equipment as a whole project would be challenging. The Council agreed to look at the refurbishment piecemeal and in honour of the Queen's Jubilee to name the park as the 'Platinum Park' and for plaques to erected to that affect.

11. To note the footpath report provided by the footpath warden.

The footpath warden gave a verbal report regarding the condition of the footpaths. She requested some assistance from the Council regarding FP18 where she had a concern regarding health and safety. It was agreed to ask the Direct Services Officer to meet with the footpath warden at the beginning of May. The footpath warden was thanked for her time and dedication.

12. To receive committee updates.

a. Planning & Highway Committee

i. To note the planning minutes from 21st March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held 21 March 2022 were noted by the Council.
The committee asked for an update on an application from Lime Tree Farm.

Councillor Woodham left the meeting at 20:36

b. Events Committee

i. To note the events minutes from 21st March 2022

The minutes from the meeting held 21 March 2022 were noted by the Council.

c. Finance Committee

i. To note the finance minutes from 28th March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held 28th March 2022 were noted by the Council.

ii. To discuss and decide on recommendations from the finance committee

1. Financial Regulation policy

Financial Regulation policy was adopted by the Council

2. Investment policy

Investment policy was adopted by the Council.

3. Financial Risk Management

Financial Risk Management was adopted by the Council.



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4. Standing Orders

Standing Orders was adopted by the Council.

5. Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct was adopted by the Council, it was discussed and agreed that all members will be signing a copy of the Code of Conduct, to confirm they have read and understood, which will be held in the Council office.

13. Meeting dates

a. Leisure & Pavilion committee – 26th April 2022 @ 11am (site visit)

This was noted by the Council.

b. Finance committee – 25th April 2022 @ 7pm

This was noted by the Council

Councillor Kenna gave apologies due to a prior commitment.

c. Full Council - 9th May 2022 @ 7pm (Annual Town Council Meeting)

This was noted by the Council.

14. To close the meeting to press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the disclosure of confidential information (land, contracts, staffing matters)

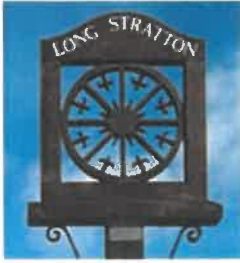
There was no press or public to dismiss.

15. Staffing Matters

a. Accident at work – update.

The clerk confirmed that there had been no update.

With there being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 20:47.



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Councillors and Committee members

Councillor Kevin Worsley, Long Stratton Chairman
Vice Chairman Councillor Kelly Lunness
Councillor Susan Smith
Councillor Diane Woodham
Councillor Bob Mackenzie
Councillor Christina Kenna

Councillor Andrew Lansdell
Councillor Matt Pochin
Councillor Judith Baker
Councillor Louise Mundford
Councillor David Ridgway
Councillor Tony Wright

Committees

Planning & Highways:

Councillor Andrew Lansdell
Councillor Judith Baker
Councillor Bob Mackenzie

Councillor Diane Woodham
Councillor Susan Smith
Councillor David Ridgway

Leisure (including the Pavilion):

Councillor Kevin Worsley
Councillor Judith Baker
Councillor Louise Mundford
Councillor Diane Woodham

Councillor Kelly Lunness
Councillor Matt Pochin
Councillor Bob Mackenzie

Events:

Councillor Kelly Lunness
Councillor Matt Pochin

Councillor David Ridgway
Councillor Louise Mundford

Finance & Policy management:

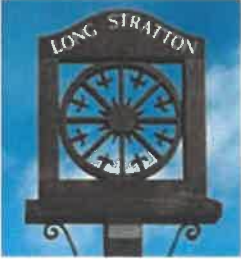
Councillor Kevin Worsley
Councillor Bob Mackenzie
Councillor Susan Smith

Councillor Matt Pochin
Councillor Kelly Lunness

Staffing Committee:

Councillor Matt Pochin
Councillor Kelly Lunness

Councillor Judith Baker
Councillor Louise Mundford



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INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Long Stratton Town Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

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 be they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council has appointed a Chairman, who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings. The chairman ensures the meetings run lawfully and signs all pages of the minutes.

Decisions are made within the Standing Orders and Financial regulations which are approved by the town council and last reviewed and approved at full Council meeting held 11th April 2022

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 laws 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 full duties of the Clerk and RFO are laid down in a Job description.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its December meeting. The December or January meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Full Council meets at least 10 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Town Clerk.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Payments; all payments are reported to the Council for noting/ approval in guidance with Financial regulations. Two Members of the Council must authorise every cheque. Digital payments must be



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input by the RFO and authorised by two signatories. Invoices paid by BACS are authorised in line with financial regulations. Invoices paid by direct debit, standing order and credit card will be spot checked by the Council's appointed scrutineer no less than quarterly. The payment list presented to council will be signed by the Chairman presiding at the meeting.

All payments over £500 will be listed on the website to comply with The Governments Transparency Code 2015.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management: The council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit: The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records,
- Procedures,
- Systems,
- Internal Control,
- Regulations,
- Risk Management and Reviews

The Council carries out an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal audit.

External Audit: The Council's External Auditors, (PKF Littlejohn) submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council for display.

3. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting 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.

4. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

To prevent significant internal control issues the following was put in place



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- An accounts package is used to enable the accounts to be managed efficiently
- The bank signatories were increased.
- The Finance Committee will meet a minimum of 4 times per year where scrutiny of all matter financial will be scrutinised.

The Council appoints an internal scrutineer annually at the Annual Town Council meeting and the following applies.

- The internal scrutineer carries out a minimum of quarterly checks and will provide a written report to the finance committee at the following meeting. The internal scrutineer must not be a signatory of the bank accounts and must be a member of the Council.
- The checks should cover all financial activities of the Town Council over the financial year on a sample basis. Payments should be checked by
 - Account total correct and accompanied by appropriate invoice/ authorisation and abides by legislation rules on what a council can spend on 'Power to Spend' unless General Power of Competence has been adopted.
 - BACS and cheque invoices countersigned by 2 signatories
 - Full payment list has been disclosed accurately to Council

Receipts should be checked by

- Amount entered is correct
- Amount has been banked promptly
- Receipts list has been disclosed accurately to Council
- The Internal scrutineer will
 - Check salaries and contracts of employment
 - Check policies are being reviewed and adopted in a timely fashion.
 - Ensure the Council is complying with the Government Transparency Code 2015
 - Have access to all documentation required to fulfil the role.
 - Write a short report to confirm findings to Council
 - Can make recommendations where appropriate for Full Council consideration.

Reviewed and adopted

May 2020



Long Stratton Town Council

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CO-OPTION POLICY

1. Background

The process for co-option is only partially prescribed in law but there is best practice advice and guidelines around certain aspects of the process. Items marked in bold are prescribed in law.

2. Scope and purpose

This policy aims to explain the procedure regarding co-option. The information contained in it is to be used by members of the council and members of the public. The aim of the policy is also to show that the council endeavours to treat all applicants fairly and alike, and to ensure that the process is also seen as fair, open and transparent. This policy details the processes to be followed regarding co-option.

3. When a vacancy arises

A co-option vacancy arises when a member of the Council leaves, and the position is formally advertised for 14 days. At the end of this 14-day period if insufficient names have submitted a request to the District / Borough Council to call for an election (this is 10 names) then the Council can fill the vacancy by co-option. (Refer Local Government Act 1972 s86 and 87(2)(b))

3.1 Applications

We aim to encourage applications from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand. Councillors or parishioners can approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option. Co-option vacancies will be advertised on the website and on the noticeboards and in media releases. The advertisement for the co-option will include:

- a) Method by which applications can be made. This will be in writing to the Clerk
- b) The closing date for written applications.
- c) Contact point for potential candidates to obtain more information – the Clerk
- d) Advice that further information is available electronically via the website - a form to complete which includes a maximum of 100 words asking the candidate why they would like to be a councillor; name; address and other contact details.
- e) **If an applicant provides a written application, they are agreeing to sharing their personal details under GDPR with Council members.**



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1.2 When applications are received, the Clerk will confirm eligibility. Any candidate found to be offering inducements will be disqualified.

The Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply.

3.2 Attendance following an application

All eligible candidates shall be invited by letter, to attend the next council meeting following the application deadline. They will be asked to confirm their attendance at the meeting. In the event of candidates being unable to attend, this meeting will not be rearranged, **however the application will still be considered and will be notified in writing of the outcome.** All members receive copies of applications ahead of the meeting. Applications are to be treated as confidential (see 3.1 (e) above). A candidate, on confirming that they will attend the meeting will be sent a copy of the agenda and agenda papers.

4. Commitment

The council is keen that potential candidates understand the commitment which is required from councillors. Anyone interested in standing will be encouraged to look at the website for more information on the role of being a councillor and will receive an information sheet on the work of the council. Candidates will also be told that they are expected to attend an Induction training event which may be held externally or in the parish.

5. The process of Co-option at the Council meeting

There is an early agenda item at which each candidate will be asked to make a brief verbal presentation on why they would like to be a councillor and the skills they can offer the council. (3 minutes maximum per candidate). All of this, including the voting for the candidate will be in public. Candidates may be asked questions by members. In the event of a candidate being unable to attend, his / her application will still be considered by members. In the event of a candidate being related to a councillor, then the councillor would be expected to declare an interest and request a dispensation to speak and vote. **Candidates may be asked to leave the room for existing members to discuss however will be invited back for the vote which must be held in the public domain.**

6. Voting

Only councillors present at the meeting may vote. There will be one vote per vacancy to be filled. (Chairman may have a casting vote). **The successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting.** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12). If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given



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to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again. The process is to be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

7. More than one vacancy

If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equal the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.

8. Any previous election

The council does not consider claims of candidates who were unsuccessful at previous elections.

9. Starting as a councillor

The successful candidate (s) are asked to start as a councillor immediately after completing their declarations of acceptance of office. **The fact that the new member has not received a summons does not make his / her attendance as a councillor illegal.** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12, para 10(3)). Where appropriate they will also be appointed to any Council committee. If an absent candidate is successful, members must agree to him / her signing the declaration of acceptance of office before or at the very start of the next meeting. New councillors will also be made aware of the fact that Interests Forms will need to be completed within 28 days of co-option.

10. Filling a Co-option vacancy

There is no obligation for the Council to co-opt if the council only has 6 months left of its 4-year term.

Report to Long Stratton Town Council

The End of Year Internal Audit Review 2021/22

1. Introduction and Summary.

1.1 The Internal Auditor visited the Town Council offices on 22 April 2022 to complete the End-of-Year Internal Audit, which focussed upon the adequacy of systems of internal controls operating during the period November 2021 to March 2022 and included the examination of the End of Year Accounts for 2021/22. Mrs Becky Buck, the Council's Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), was in attendance.

1.2 The-End-of-Year Review builds upon the Interim (Half-yearly) Review completed in November 2021 which examined the adequacy of systems of internal controls operating during the period April 2021 to October 2021.

1.3 The overall Internal Audit work undertaken in 2021/22 ensured that the Town Council was supported throughout the year in terms of receiving assurance upon the adequacy and efficiency of key systems in place.

1.4 The Interim Internal Audit Report highlighted that the first half of the year 2021/22 had been a challenging one for the Council and the Clerk/RFO, not only in terms of the impact of the continuing effects of the pandemic but also as a result of the periods of ill-health suffered by Mrs Buck and the lack of staff resources available to attend to many of the administrative tasks that needed to be addressed. Whilst there are still some operational and administrative actions that remain outstanding, the overall internal audit review confirmed that the Council's governance arrangements and internal control framework remain effective and are being supported satisfactorily by the Clerk/RFO.

1.5 Long Stratton Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan was successfully adopted in September 2021 and reported to Council at the meeting held in October 2021. The aspirations put forward by the community have been used to create a 5-year Action Plan (2019 – 2024) which sits beneath the higher-level document and aims to facilitate the delivery of the agreed overall strategic objectives.

1.6 It is evident from the Action Plan that the Council plans to undertake a number of projects to benefit the community. The projects will impact upon both financial and staff resources. Following a review of staffing resources by a consultant, the Council approved an additional part-time Administrative Assistant post to support the Clerk/RFO to move forward with the Action Plan within an overall framework of effective and robust financial management and control.

1.7 By examination of the 2021/22 accounts and supporting documentation it was confirmed that the Clerk, in the role as the Council's RFO, satisfactorily undertook the administration of the Council's financial affairs and produced satisfactory financial management information to enable the Council to make well-informed decisions.

Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2021/22)

1.8 The Accounts for the 2021/22 year confirm the following:

Total Income for the year:	£252,306
Total Expenditure for the year:	£232,475
Total Reserves at the year-end:	£224,014

1.9 The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP, was examined and the figures listed below were agreed with the Clerk/RFO for inclusion in Section 2 – The Statement of Accounts 2021/22 (rounded for purposes of the Return):

Balances at beginning of year (1 April 2021):	Box 1: £204,183
Annual Precept 2021/22:	Box 2: £180,193
Total Other Receipts:	Box 3: £72,113
Staff Costs:	Box 4: £92,897
Loan interest/capital repayments:	Box 5: £17,536
All Other payments:	Box 6: £122,042
Balances carried forward (31 March 2022):	Box 7: £224,014
Total cash/short-term investments:	Box 8: £222,732
Total fixed assets:	Box 9: £1,586,770 * Note 1
Total borrowings:	Box 10: £359,188 * Note 2

* Note 1: Requires verification by the Clerk/RFO (see item 12 below)

* Note 2: Box 10 consists of outstanding balances of PWLB loan (£239,250); the loan outstanding to Salix Finance Ltd. (£16,062) and loan outstanding to South Norfolk District Council (£103,876).

1.10 Sections One and Two of the AGAR are to be approved and signed at a forthcoming meeting of the Council. The Internal Auditor has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 within the AGAR.

1.11 Details of the work completed under the End of Year review 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 Council's overall governance arrangements were examined in detail during the Interim Internal Audit Review in November 2021 and were found to be of a high standard.

2.2 The adoption of the **Neighbourhood Plan** is a significant development in the Council's overall planning and governance arrangements. The Council received regular updates on the progress of the Plan, which covers the entirety of the parish of Long Stratton and part of the parish of Tharston with an intended lifespan to 2036.

2

Comprehensive details of the Plan have been published on the Council's website together with the way in which residents may engage with the Council. At its meeting on 11 October 2021 the Council formally noted that the Neighbourhood Plan had been successfully adopted.

2.3 The Council is using the Neighbourhood Plan as an overarching strategic document. The aspirations put forward by the community have been used to create a 5-year Action Plan (2019 – 2024) which is a closely focussed document sitting beneath the higher-level document and acts as a fluid, 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. It was noted that the published Minutes of the meeting on 11 April 2022 are headed incorrectly as '14 March 2022'.

2.6 **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** are in place and are based on the model documents published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Both documents were reviewed and updated by the Finance and Policy Committee on 28 March 2022 and approved by Full Council on 11 April 2022.

2.7 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.

2.8 **The Council's address on the Data Protection Registration displays the former Council offices in The Street, under the heading of Long Stratton Parish Council. The previous Internal Audit recommended that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 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 and this recommendation remains outstanding.**

2.9 The Council demonstrates good practice by maintaining a wide range of formal **Policies, Procedures and Protocols** including a General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy and a Data Protection Privacy Notice. Other Policies and Procedures in place include a Grant Awarding Policy, Grant and Funding Receiving

Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Complaints Procedure and a Website Accessibility Statement. These documents have been published on the Council's website.

2.10 In addition, the Council has formally adopted a number of Staffing Policies and Procedures including a Training and Development Policy, Lone Working Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy and a Disciplinary Policy

2.11 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 arrangements in place to ensure a structured, programmed review of policies, to ensure that none are overlooked and all continue to be kept up-to-date and fit for purpose.

2.12 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Code of Conduct for Councillors is being observed by the Council. The Interim Audit Report dated 15 November 2021 noted that it was not clear when the Code was adopted or last reviewed by the Council, a copy had not been published on the Council's website and the report recommended that the Code of Conduct should be presented to the Council and formally re-adopted to ensure that all Councillors are made aware of the details in the Code aimed to maintain a high standard of governance. The Code was reviewed and agreed by the Finance and Management Committee on 28 March 2022 and approved by Full Council on 11 April 2022.

2.13 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 2021/22 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 has in previous years received relevant training on the RBS system and is able 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 The Clerk/RFO continues to be the designated system administrator having principal access to all functions. The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that currently the two Administrative Assistants are not users of the RBS system.

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

Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2021/22)

- a) The 2021/22 Quarter 1 re-claim for the £1,357.89 net VAT paid from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021 was received at bank on 17 August 2021.
- b) The 2020/21 Quarter 4 re-claim for the £2,146.91 net VAT paid from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021 had not been received from HMRC. Following advice from HMRC this amount was included with the Quarter 2 VAT claim for £1,989.94 for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021. The overall amount of £4,136.85 was received at bank on 30 November 2021.
- c) The 2021/22 Quarter 3 re-claim for the £4,986.25 net VAT paid from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022 was received at bank on 10 February 2022.
- d) The VAT Net Closing Balance of £8,085.88 is recorded in the RBS accounting system as reclaimable as at 31 March 2022 and is shown as a Debtor in the Balance Sheet at that date.

3.5 The Cashbook Payments List and the Receipts List for the 2021/22 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 the Interim Internal Audit in November 2021 by means of examination of a wide-ranging sample of transactions covering payments made in the period April 2021 to October 2021. This End of Year Internal Audit tested a smaller sample of transactions in the period November 2021 to March 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 to apply in the year 2022/23 provides that two Councillors' sign each invoice paid by BACS or cheque. Credit card payments are to be spot-checked by the Councillor Internal Scrutineer. A list of payments and receipts is to be presented to the Council at each meeting and signed by the Chairman. Direct debit payments are authorised annually.

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 has resolved that all Councillors should be asked to be Signatories for the Unity Trust Bank Accounts.

4.2 Bank Reconciliations are normally routinely presented to the Finance and Policy Management Committee. At the year-end 31 March 2022 the Council had a

Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2021/22)

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 12 July 2021, Councillors confirmed the accuracy of the Bank Reconciliations for the period April to June 2021. The Bank Reconciliations for that period were also verified by Full Council at its meeting on 19 July 2021 (Minute 8 refers). Bank reconciliations were not presented to Council at its meetings on 13 September 2021 or 11 October 2021 due to the Clerk/RFO's absence through ill-health.

4.4 The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that completed Bank Reconciliations are now being routinely presented to the Finance and Policy Management Committee and the Council. Bank Reconciliations are an extremely important element of financial control within a local council and it is important that the Council and its designated Councillor Internal Scrutineer receive a completed, up-to-date reconciliation for confirmation of accuracy as soon as possible after the date of the reconciliation.

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 (Minute 16dii refers). On 28 March 2022 the Finance and Policy Management Committee approved an Asset and Investment Policy and resolved to close the NS&I Account.

4.6 The overall Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 31 March 2022 was presented to the Internal Auditor. The Accounts did not initially agree with the Bank Statements because a Direct Debit loan repayment of £2,294.64 had been brought into the accounts as at 31 March 2022 but had not passed through the bank by 31 March 2022. The Clerk/RFO consulted RBS in order to make the necessary correction. Following this adjustment, the reconciliation can be displayed as follows:

	£
<i>Confirmed Bank and Investment Balances:</i>	222,731.62
<i>Less Unpresented Payments:</i>	0.00
<i>Add Receipts not on bank statement:</i>	0.00
<i>Closing Balance:</i>	<u>222,731.62</u>
<i>Account balances per RBS:</i>	220,436.98
<i>Add back loan repayment recorded in accounts as at 30 March 2022 but not taken from bank until April 2022</i>	2,294.64
	<u>222,731.62</u>

Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2021/22)

4.7 The latest available Bank Statements as at 31 March 2022 were confirmed by the Internal Auditor as:

Unity Trust (Current Account) as at 31 March 2022: £25,645.83
Unity Trust (Deposit Account) as at 31 March 2022: £150,607.46

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).

Unity Cash Back Card balance as at 31 March 2022: £0.27 (this is an historical balance and not significant in the context of the Council's finances and can accordingly be written off).

4.8 The Internal Auditor discussed the **Financial Services Compensation Scheme** with the Clerk/RFO and its application to the Town Council. The scheme provides that smaller local councils are protected in the same way as other protected investors i.e. for deposits/investments up to £85,000 with any UK bank, building society and credit union. The Council currently has sums invested with the Unity Trust Bank significantly over the amount of £85,000.

4.9 The Council considered and adopted the Asset and Investment Policy at its meeting on 11 April 2022. The Policy provides a framework to be applied by the Council in the management of bank accounts and investments.

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.

5. Year End procedures (Regarding accounting procedures used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents. Verifying sample payments and income. Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate).

5.1 End-of-Year accounts are prepared on an Income and Expenditure basis and, following the correction referred to in the Bank Reconciliation item above, were in good order. Sample audit trails were undertaken and were found to be in order.

5.2 The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet were examined in detail and queries arising from the review were resolved with the Clerk/RFO.

5.3 A Statement of Analysis of Variances (explaining significant differences in receipts and payments between the years 2020/21 and 2021/22) has yet to be prepared by the Clerk/RFO for submission to the External Auditors and publication on the Council's website.

5.4 The Outstanding Debtors List (totalling £8,085.88) recorded as at 31 March 2022 consisted of the VAT due for reclaim at that date from HMRC in respect of VAT paid

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in the final Quarter of 2021/22. The Listed Creditors at the year-end totalled £6,803.02 and included (inter alia) the floodlight electricity costs of £3,637.61 for the MUGA (Quarter 4, 2021/22).

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

Precept 2021/22: £180,193 (4 January 2021, Minute 6b refers)

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

6.1 The **Budget for the year 2021/22** was agreed by Full Council on 9 November 2020 and a Precept of £180,193 was confirmed at the Council's meeting on 4 January 2021. The 2021/22 Budget was both detailed and informative and acted as a sound basis on which the Council could operate effective budgetary control and scrutiny during the 2021/22 year.

6.2 At its meeting on 12 July 2021 the Finance and Policy Management Committee considered in detail a Budget Control/Monitoring Report for the period April to June 2021 which compared the income and expenditure for 2021/22 (Quarter 1) with the budget available under each heading. The Report was received by Full Council at its meeting on 19 July 2021 (Minute 6d refers).

6.3 The Budget Control/Monitoring Report for the period July to November 2021 was presented to the Finance and Policy Committee on 29 November 2021. 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 recommend any remedial action to the Council as necessary.

6.4 The **Draft Budget for 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. The Council approved a newsletter to be sent to all residents to give context to the increase

6.5 At its meeting on 15 November 2021 the Staffing Committee confirmed its support for the Clerk/RFO's Community Governance study from 2023 and recommended to Council that an additional £1,800 be placed in Earmarked Reserves to go towards covering the cost of the degree. This was approved by the Council on 13 December 2021.

6.6 The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with an Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022 which displayed overall Reserves available to the Council as £224,014 and included Earmarked/Restricted Reserves of £200,760 as follows:

- Lighting:	£10,000
- Training:	£3,600
- Pavilion:	£628
- MUGA Replacement:	£33,167
- Events:	£500
- Playingfield Emergency:	£32,000 (includes the CIL balance of £3,404)
- Land Purchase:	£13,265
- Town Improvements:	£65,000 * <i>Note 1</i>
- Noticeboards:	£3,000
- Swann Lane Toilets:	£39,600

* *Note 1*: At its meeting on 19 July 2021 the Council agreed to amend the Methodist Church Earmarked Reserve to a Town Improvements Fund Earmarked Reserve.

6.7 The General Reserves (Overall Reserves less Earmarked/Restricted Reserves) accordingly stood at £23,254 which (as at the end of the 2020/21 year) are significantly less than the generally accepted position that non-earmarked revenue reserves should usually be between three and twelve months of Net Revenue Expenditure (the JPAG Proper Practices Guide, Item 5.32 refers).

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.

7. 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).

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

7.2 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 Authorising of Payments**. At its meeting on 10 May 2021 the Council authorised the suppliers receiving regular payments from the Council and the direct debits/standing orders for those payments. At each meeting the Council normally receives and approves a list of the receipts and payments since the previous meeting (at the meeting on 11 October 2021 the listing of payments since 13 September 2021 was not presented to Council because of the Clerk/RFO's absence through ill-health).

7.3 The previous Internal Audit Report explained that:

(a) 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*'.

(b) 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 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.

7.4 The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the data relating to all payments for the period 8 November 2021 to 13 December 2021 and the period 13 March 2022 to 11 April 2022 were attached to the Minutes to meet the above requirements. **However, to fully comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 the Council needs to publish on its website the payments over £500 (excluding salaries and wages) for the complete year.**

7.5 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Transparency Code requirements are being met from the 2022/23 year of account.

7.6 The Council formally appointed the Internal Auditor for the 2021/22 year at its meeting on 11 October 2021 (Minute 15 refers). The Internal Auditor was directed to undertake two internal audit reviews in the financial year, an Interim Audit Review and an End-of-Year Internal Review in April/May 2022.

7.7 The Interim Internal Audit Report dated 15 November 2021 was noted by the Council on 7 February 2022 (Minute 7 refers).

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

8.1 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.

8.2 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the annual staff appraisals for the Clerk/RFO, the Groundsman and the Administrative Assistant had taken place in January 2022 and the results reported to Council on 7 February 2022 (Minute 19 refers).

8.3 The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with the details of the salary payments to staff from December 2021 to March 2022. A sample of the wage/salary payments made to staff was examined and confirmed the following:

Internal Audit Review for Long Stratton Town Council (2021/22)

- a) As at 31 March 2022 the Clerk/RFO was being paid at NJC Scale Point 43. The Council noted on 7 February 2022 the Clerk/RFO's contractual pay rise. The National Salary Award back dated to 1 April 2021 was included in the March 2022 salary payment.
- b) The previous Internal Audit Report noted that salary was payable to the Administrative Assistant at NJC Scale Point 8 which equates to £10.65 per hour x 15 hours x 52/12 = £692.25 gross pay per month. The gross salary paid since 1 April 2021 had been £707.53 resulting in an overpayment of £15.28 per month to the Administrative Assistant since April 2021. The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the overpayment was recovered within the March 2022 salary payment, which included the 2021/22 Salary Award. The Council noted on 7 February 2022 the contractual pay rise due to the Administrative Assistant.
- c) The Direct Services Officer (formerly Head Groundsman) was being paid at an agreed salary in accordance with the Contract of Employment in place. A salary increase of 2.5% took effect from April 2021 (approval at the Council's meeting on 12 October 2021 refers). At the meeting on 7 February 2022 the Council agreed to the pay rise to SCP 15 with advancement to SCP 16 after 6 months satisfactory performance.
- d) The Council's litter picker is being paid for 6 hours per week at the current national minimum wage.
- e) The Pavilion Cleaner is on zero hours contract at the current national minimum wage.

8.4 An additional Administrative Assistant began employment with the Council on 21 February 2022 and is paid for 12 hours per week at the current minimum national wage. A Contract of Employment is in place and a copy was presented to the Internal Auditor.

8.5 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).

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

9.1 Two Lloyds Bank Corporate Credit Cards (under the one account) are used by the Clerk/RFO, the Head Groundsman. Settlement of the outstanding amount is made in full by monthly direct debit.

9.2 At the meeting on 13 December 2021 the Council agreed to provide a further credit card, with a £250 limit, to the Administrative Assistant. The corporate spending limit was increased to £3,000 to cover the limits on all 3 cards.

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9.3 The Interim Internal Audit Report dated 15 November 2021 noted that no formal written instructions were 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. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that Financial Regulations have since been updated to include use of, and arrangements in place for, the Credit Cards.

9.4 A sample of credit card payments was examined during the End-of-Year Audit and each item examined was supported by an invoice/voucher.

9.5 The Council does not operate a Petty Cash Account.

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

10.1 The Receipts system is operated within the RBS Accounting System. There is a clear audit trail from the income recorded in the RBS accounting system to bank account statements. Income received during the period April 2021 and October 2021 was examined during the Interim Internal Audit work undertaken in November 2021, when a sample of income transactions were verified to the bank statements.

10.2 The Internal Auditor examined a sample of Receipts recorded in the RBS system for the Unity (Current) Account between 1 November 2021 and 31 March 2022. The sample was examined with reference to the bank statements and was found to be in order.

10.3 The Council's Fees and Charges were 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 Long Stratton Football Club Contract (LSFC) were agreed together with the terms and conditions for regular users and one-off users (Minutes 23 and 24 refer).

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

11.1 The Finance and Policy Committee reviewed the **Internal Control and Risk Assessment documentation** on 28 March 2022 and recommended adoption by Full Council on 11 April 2022 (within the 2022/23 financial year).

11.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require a review by the Full Council at least once during 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. The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the Full Council did not undertake a review in the 2021/22 financial year and accordingly the Internal Auditor must state 'No' at Line C in the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22.

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.

11.4 Risk Assessment documents 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.

11.5 An important area of risk management within local councils concerns the adequate maintenance of play equipment. In this respect, at its meeting on 11 October 2021 the Council noted the most recent Play Inspection Report and approved a contractor to undertake the repair work required. The Council charged the Leisure and Pavilion Committee (which met on 27 October 2021) to review the Report, the budgets for play equipment and the process for community engagement leading to the acquisition of new play equipment.

11.6 Also at the meeting 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.

11.7 An **Internal Control Policy** is in place and requires that the Council shall appoint a Councillor as its Internal Control Scrutineer. The previous Internal Audit Report dated 15 November 2021 confirmed that the Council did not have a Councillor Scrutineer in place at that time and recommended that the Council should appoint, as soon as practicably possible, a Councillor Internal Control Scrutineer to routinely examine and report upon the Council's Internal Control arrangements.

11.8 The Finance and Management Committee appointed a Councillor Internal Scrutineer at its meeting on 29 November 2021 in accordance with the Council's Internal Control Policy. The Scrutineer has yet to undertake a review of the internal controls in place. The Internal Auditor met the Councillor Internal Scrutineer on 22 April 2022 and discussed the scope of work that can be undertaken on a Quarterly basis. The work undertaken by the Councillor Internal Control Scrutineer can assist in informing the Council in its completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) each year.

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.

11.9 **Insurance** cover is in place. At its meeting on 12 April 2021 the Council approved the renewal payment of £3,980.15 to Came and Company for insurance cover for 2021/22. The insurance cover is held with AXA Insurance until 31 May 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.

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

12.1 A stand-alone Asset Register is in place, being maintained on an Excel spreadsheet. The Register is not supported by the RBS Accounting System.

12.2 The Register records the value of assets at Replacement Cost and displays a total value of assets of £1,586,770 as at 31 March 2022 compared to a value of £1,576,135 as at the end of the previous year, 31 March 2021. The net increase in valuation of £10,635 did not reconcile with the list of additions to the Register in the year (£17,414) and the list of disposals in the year (£10,104), which provides a net increase of only £7,310.

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.

12.3 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the up-dated Asset Register has been reviewed but has not yet been formally approved by the Council. The Clerk/RFO also confirmed that when staffing resources allow, the Council will consider integrating the Asset Register into the RBS Accounting System as an efficient way to maintain the records and to make all necessary updates.

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

13.1 The **External Audit Report and Certificate** by PKF Littlejohn LLP for the year 2020/21 was dated 20 September 2021 and raised no issues of concern.

13.2 The Report and Certificate was reported to the Council at its meeting on 11 October 2021 (Minute 14 refers). The External Audit Certificate (Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) has been published on the Council's website.

14. Publication Requirements.

14.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 authorities must publish each year the following information on a publicly accessible website:

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

To be published following completion of the External Audit:

Notice of Conclusion of Audit

AGAR - Section 3

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

The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the documents in respect of the year 2020/21 were readily accessible on the Council's website:

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

14.2 The Notice of the period for the exercise of Public Rights had been made by the Clerk on 28 June 2021. The Interim Internal Audit noted that the Notice appeared to be an over-write of an earlier pro forma used for the year 2018/19 and refers to the Accounts ending 31 March 2019 at Section 2 (and should have referred to the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021). The Clerk/RFO has confirmed that in future years the correct details of the particular year of account will be displayed.

14.3 As reported at item 7.4 above, the Council has, at the time of the audit, yet to comply fully with the publication requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The Code 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 (other than salaries and wages) that exceeds £500.

15. Additional Comments.

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

Trevor Brown

Trevor Brown, CPFA

Internal Auditor

25 April 2022

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2022**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2022**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2022
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2022 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2021/22**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2022 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2022.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2021) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2022).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2022**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2022 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

LONG STRATTON TOWN COUNCIL

longstrattoncouncil.info

During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		✓	SEE DETAILED AUDIT REPORT
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓ NONE HELD
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements		✓	SEE DETAILED AUDIT REPORT
M. The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2020/21 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

22/04/2022

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

TREVOR BROWN C.P.F.A.

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

T. Brown

Date

22/04/2022

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

	Year ending		Notes and guidance	
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £		
1. Balances brought forward	198,158	204,183	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>	
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	174,804	180,193	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>	
3. (+) Total other receipts	63,073	72,113	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>	
4. (-) Staff costs	RESTATED 86,305	92,897	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>	
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	19,269	17,536	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>	
6. (-) All other payments	RESTATED 126,278	121,858	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>	
7. (=) Balances carried forward	204,183	224,198	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>	
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	210,503	222,732	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>	
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,576,135	TBC	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>	
10. Total borrowings	367,957	359,188	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>	
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	N/A	<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
				<i>N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Long Stratton Town Council

Pavilion, Manor Road Playing Fields, Manor Road, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XR

Chairman: Mr Kevin Worsley. Clerk: Mrs B Buck

Tel: 01508 530524

Email: Becky.buck@longstrattontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.longstrattoncouncil.info

Restated AGAR figure 2020-21

Box 4

The correct figure is £86,305 which is staff payments of £75,948 and employers overheads of £10,357 all other payments needed to go to box 6.

Box 6

In 2020-21 was £120,323 and has been restated to include the other payments from box 4 now totalling £126,278.

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2021/22

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2021/22

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date



Long Stratton Town Council

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Minutes of the Finance and Policy Management meeting held 25 April 2022 @ 7pm in the Pavilion, Manor Road

In attendance: Councillors, Susan Smith, Kelly Lunness, Matt Pochin and Tony Wright
Becky Buck (Clerk and RFO)

1. To consider apologies for absence

Councillor Kenna gave apologies due to prior commitments, these were noted by the Council.

2. To receive disclosures of interest and dispensations

There were no disclosures of interest or dispensation.

3. To confirm the minutes of the previous Finance and Policy Management Committee meeting held on the 28 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held 28 March were approved by the committee and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. To discuss and decide on the electricity supplies to the MUGA

(Note meeting arranged with LSFC on May 16th at 7pm)

The electricity cost for the floodlights on the MUGA were discussed, the clerk confirmed that the lights have now been changed to LED's which will reduce the cost and is better for the environment. As a result of the latest change, it was too early to ascertain how this will impact the cost of the floodlights and therefore the committee asked if this can be discussed at the next committee meeting. As the last invoice was much larger than anticipated and under dispute, the committee instructed the Clerk to cancel the direct debit until it had been resolved.

5. To note the internal auditor report from 22nd April 2022

The internal audit report was discussed at length, the clerk took the committee through the recommendations and discussed what actions needed to be taken to rectify the matters. This is as follows.

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.

The clerk advised that the Financial Services Compensation Scheme covers bank accounts up to £85,000 which currently the Council is in excess of. The council has already taken some steps to mitigate this with opening an account with CCLA.

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

Signed by the Chairman.....Date.....



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review during 2022/23 in order to ensure that amounts held are more in line with the JPAG Proper Practices Guide.

The Clerk advised that currently the General Reserves amount stands at £23,254 and as a minimum to comply with JPAG Proper Practices Guide it should stand at £53,755.

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.

The Clerk advised that the Internal Control Policy had not been reviewed in this financial year. The Clerk advised that it will on May's Full Council agenda for review.

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.

The Clerk advised the committee that Councillor Mackenzie is the Council's internal scrutineer and that he had met with the internal auditor on 22nd April 22 and the first scrutineer check will take place on Friday 29th April at 10am.

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.

The Clerk advised that at the time of the internal audit there was a discrepancy of £3235 between movements within the Council's assets during the financial year. Since the audit the Clerk had rescrutinised the discrepancy and accounted for the amount and evidenced this to the committee.

6. To review all year end documentation for 2021-22.

The committee reviewed the following year end documentation.

- Income and Expenditure against budget report. The committee went through the report in detail and examined the budget codes where expenditure had exceeded the budget allowance, this was supported in the meeting by the nominal ledger that detailed all the payments. The committee was satisfied with the expenditure. The overall figures for the year showed that the Council's expenditure for the year was £232,292 and the Council's income was £252,306 this includes movements from EMR of £15,502 and to EMR of £39,600.
- Annual Governance and Accounting Report (AGAR) was discussed, page 3 which details the internal auditor report 2 statements the Internal Auditor did not feel the Council had comply with, the 1st, that the Council had satisfactory internal control in place. This was due to the Internal Control Policy not having been reviewed, the Clerk advised that this

Signed by the Chairman.....Date.....



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has now been done and will be reviewed at the next full council meeting in May. The 2nd was that the Council had not complied with the transparency code which states that all payments over £500 need to be displayed on the website. The Clerk confirmed to the committee that this information had been collated and is now on the website.

- The committee reviewed supporting documentation for the AGAR such as Explanation of Variances between 2020-21 & 2021-22. The document requires any variance of over 15% to be explained. The clerk was pleased to confirm that the end of year figures required no explanation as they were comparable to 2020-21. The committee also reviewed end of year income and expenditure reconciliation and cash and investment reconciliation which supported the figures on the AGAR.

7. To discuss and decide on any recommendations to Council following the year end documentation review and internal auditor report.

The following recommendations were made:

- The asset and investment policy to be amended to incorporate a risk assessment of the Council's bank accounts and view to having accounts in excess of £85,000
- To move EMR into general reserves, option 1, to be taken from Town Improvement Fund, option 2 to have a combination taken from Town Improvement Fund reserves and MUGA improvement reserves.

The Committee discussed the Council's financial year 2021-22 and recognised that it had been a difficult year but there were ways for the Council's finances could be more efficient to prevent discrepancies and errors being made in 2022-23. The Committee recognised this was largely down to resource issues within the Council office which was supported by previous internal audit reports and the commissioned resource review undertaken during 2021-22. With the additional admin officer recruited in February 2021, the Committee stated that the Council's finances should operate more efficiently in the upcoming financial year.

With there being no further business; the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:25

Signed by the Chairman.....Date.....



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MINUTES OF THE LEISURE AND PAVILION MEETING HELD ON 26th APRIL 2022 AT 11am AT MANOR ROAD PAVILION AND PLAYING FIELDS.

In Attendance: Councillors Baker, Woodham, Pochin & Mackenzie

Becky Buck, Town Clerk & Tom Thompson, Direct Services Officer

1. To consider apologies for absence

Apologies of absence was received from Councillors Mundford and Lunness due to family commitments, these were noted by the Committee.

2. To receive disclosures of interest and dispensations

There were no disclosures of interest or dispensation received.

3. To inspect the playing field and discuss and decide on any courses of action if required

The committee inspected the playing field and play area at length and made the following observations.

- The area by the MUGA which is currently cordoned off needs to be cleared asap and made safe as the barrier was not proving sufficient although serves a purpose of making parishioners aware that it is not safe. The Direct Services Officer advised that a skip had been ordered and most items will be cleared within the week. The grass area will be surveyed to see what could be done to level the ground and enquiries will be made to get the area levelled. Once the area has been cleared, it will be surveyed again for the next steps.
- The boot brushes on the edge of the MUGA to be removed.
- The BMX rules sign to be moved to the entrance of the gate
- The area around the metal cover near the skatepark to be levelled up
- The fencing near the skatepark is loose and the poles are coming out – to discuss with Long Stratton Football Club to get resolved
- The holes where the football goals go are uncovered and pose a trip hazard – to discuss with Long Stratton Football Club to get resolved.
- The play area wet pour (in areas) needs repairing, direct services officer to address this.
- Some of the play equipment needs sanding down and painting, direct services officer to address this.
- It was agreed to get the metal benches, blasted and powder coated in red.
- It was agreed to get the additional picnic bench in storage outside the pavilion.
- The concrete area jutting from the ground where the gym equipment is to be broken down

SIGNED.....DATE.....



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- It was noted that the gym equipment needed servicing and the plates replacing, the Clerk advised that she had chased a quote to get the gym equipment serviced but the contractor had not responded.

4. To sign the minutes from the previous meeting held on 27th October as a true record and 27th July 2021

The minutes of the meetings held 27th July 21 and 27th October 21 were approved by the committee and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

5. To discuss and decide on piece of play equipment to be installed first.

The committee understood the importance of replacing all play equipment identified however due to the lack of available funding and with the resolution made by Full Council to replace play equipment by piecemeal it was resolved to replace the main play house in the play area and the roundabout with the preferred play equipment as identified by the consultation held. The committee asked the Clerk to look into selling the house for a sum of £100.

6. To discuss and decide on advertising the pavilion to its full potential.

It was agreed to advertise the pavilion to its full potential as long as the method of advertising was free.

7. To review and recommend the following policies to full Council

a. Booking policy

This was approved for recommendation to Council, the Committee asked that the option to pay by card and cash be also offered.

b. Terms and Conditions of Hire

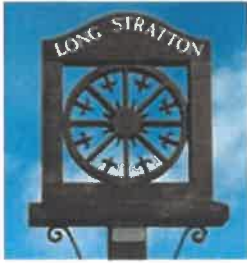
This was approved for recommendation to Council.

c. Key policy

This was approved for recommendation to Council.

With there being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 12pm

SIGNED.....DATE.....



Long Stratton Town Council

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LONG STRATTON TOWN COUNCIL PAVILION

BOOKING FORM

NAME	
ADDRESS	
EMAIL	
CONTACT NUMBER	
BOOKING DATE	
TOTAL BOOKING TIME Please allow for setting up and down	

Hire Fee

£12.50 per hour £6.25 per ½ hour

TOTAL BOOKING FEE:

50% Booking fee to be paid with booking form, final payment required 4 weeks in advance to secure booking.

DO YOU AGREE TO COMPLY WITH TERMS AND CONDITIONS SENT WITH BOOKING FORM

YES

SIGNED:

DATE:

Please be aware that failure to comply with terms and conditions will ensure you lose the damage deposit.

DAMAGE DEPOSIT OF £50 TO BE PAID WITH BOOKING FORM

AMOUNT PAYABLE

50% of booking fee £
Damage Deposit £50.00
TOTAL £

Refundable in accordance with terms and conditions
Please pay by BACS to Long Stratton Town Council
Account number 20370406 Sort code: 60-83-01
Cash & Cheque accepted.



Long Stratton Town Council

Pavilion, Manor Road, Long Stratton, NR15 2XR

Chairman: Mr Kevin Worsley. Clerk: Mrs B Buck

Tel: 01508 530524

Email: office@longstrattoncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.longstrattoncouncil.info

These standard conditions apply to all hiring of Long Stratton Town Council Pavilion. If the Hirer is in any doubt as to the meaning of the following, the Booking Administrator or Clerk to the Council should immediately be consulted.

1. Age

The Hirer, not being a person under 18 years of age, hereby accepts responsibility for being in charge, both off and on the premises at all times when the public are present and for ensuring that all conditions, under this Agreement, relating to management and supervision of the premises are met.

2. Supervision

The Hirer shall, during the period of the hiring, be responsible for:

- supervision of the premises, the fabric and the contents;
- their care, safety from damage however slight or change of any sort;
- the behaviour of all persons using the premises whatever their capacity, including proper supervision of car parking arrangements so as to avoid obstruction of the highway.

As directed by the Booking Administrator, the Hirer shall make good or pay for all damage (including accidental damage) to the premises or to the fixtures, fittings or contents and for loss of contents.

3. Use of premises

The Hirer shall not use the premises (including the car park) for any purpose other than that described in the Hiring Agreement and shall not sub-hire or use the premises or allow the premises to be used for any unlawful or unsuitable purpose or in any unlawful way nor do anything or bring onto the premises anything which may endanger the same or render invalid any insurance policies in respect thereof nor allow the consumption of alcohol thereon without written permission.

Licences and Legislation

(a) The Hirer, with the prior agreement of the Council and having attained a licence to sell alcohol and entertainment (Temporary Events Notice TENS) from South Norfolk District Council, shall be responsible for the sale, supply or consumption of alcohol or entertainment, in accordance with that licence and with any restrictions imposed by the Council, (both South Norfolk and Long Stratton).

(b) Without such agreement, the Hirer must not sell or supply alcohol or provide entertainment in a manner which would require a licence.

(c) The Hirer shall ensure that nothing is done on, or in relation to, the premises in contravention of the law relating to gaming, betting and lotteries, and copyright.

4. Insurance and indemnity

(a) The Hirer shall be liable for:

(i) the cost of repair of any damage (including accidental and malicious damage) done to any part of the premises including the curtilage thereof or the contents of the premises

(ii) all claims, losses, damages and costs made against or incurred by the Council, their employees, volunteers, council members or invitees in respect of damage or loss of property or injury to persons arising as a result of the use of the premises (including the storage of equipment) by the Hirer, and
(iii) all claims, losses, damages and costs made against or incurred by the Council, their employees, volunteers, council members as a result of any nuisance caused to a third party as a result of the use of the premises by the Hirer, and subject to sub-clause (b), the Hirer shall indemnify and keep indemnified accordingly each member of the Council, their employees, volunteers, council members against such liabilities.

(b) The Town Council shall take out adequate insurance to insure the liabilities described in sub-clauses (a)(i) above and may, in its discretion and in the case of non-commercial hirers, insure the liabilities described in sub-clauses (a) (ii) and (iii) above. The Town Council shall claim on its insurance for any liability of the Hirer here-under but the Hirer shall indemnify and keep indemnified each member of the Council, their employees, volunteers, council members against (a) any insurance excess incurred and (b) the difference between the amount of the liability and the monies received under the insurance policy.

(c) Where the Town Council does not insure the liabilities described in sub-clauses (a)(ii) and (iii) above, the Hirer shall take out adequate insurance to insure such liability and on demand shall produce the policy and current receipt or other evidence of cover to the Town Council booking administrator. Failure to produce such policy and evidence of cover will render the hiring void and enable the Town Council booking administrator to rehire the premises to another Hirer.

The Town Council is insured against any claims arising out of its own negligence.

5. Gaming, betting and lotteries

The Hirer shall ensure that nothing is done on or in relation to the premises in contravention of the law relating to gaming, betting and lotteries.

6. Film

Children shall be restricted from viewing age-restricted films classified according to the recommendations of the British Board of Film Classification. Hirers should ensure that they have the appropriate copyright licences for film. This Agreement confers the required permission on you. (The Deregulation Act 2015 requires you to have our written permission to show a film).

7. Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

The Hirer shall ensure that any activities for children, young people and other vulnerable adults are only provided by fit and proper persons in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and any subsequent legislation. When requested, The Hirer shall provide the Town Council with a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

8. Public safety compliance

The Hirer shall comply with all conditions and regulations made in respect of the premises by the Local Authority, the Licensing Authority, and the pavilion's Fire Risk Assessment or otherwise, particularly in connection with any event which constitutes regulated entertainment, at which alcohol is sold or provided or which is attended by children.



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The Fire Service

shall be called to any outbreak of fire, however slight, and details shall be given to the Town Clerk.

9. Noise

The Hirer shall ensure that the minimum of noise is made on arrival and departure, particularly late at night and early in the morning. The Hirer shall, if using sound amplification equipment, make use of any noise limitation device provided at the premises and comply with any other licensing condition for the premises.

10. Drunk and disorderly behaviour and supply of illegal drugs

The Hirer shall ensure that in order to avoid disturbing neighbours to the pavilion and avoid violent or criminal behaviour:

- care shall be taken to avoid excessive consumption of alcohol.
- no illegal drugs may be brought onto the premises.
- drunk and disorderly behaviour shall not be permitted either on the premises or in its immediate vicinity.

Any person suspected of being drunk, under the influence of drugs or who is behaving in a violent or disorderly way shall be asked to leave the premises in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.

11. Health and hygiene

The Hirer shall, if preparing, serving or selling food, observe all relevant food health and hygiene legislation and regulations. In particular, dairy products, vegetables and meat on the premises must be refrigerated and stored in compliance with the Food Temperature Regulations. The premises are provided with a refrigerator.

Please bring your own towels, tea towels, dishcloths and washing-up consumables, and take them home with you for washing or disposal. Any towels, tea towels or dishcloths found to be left drying after a hire will be disposed of.

At the end of your hire, please remove all rubbish and take it away with you. Any rubbish or recyclable material left in the pavilion or, in the vicinity of the pavilion may incur a charge.

12. Electrical appliance safety

The Hirer shall ensure that any electrical appliances brought by them to the premises and used there shall be safe, in good working order, and used in a safe manner in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Where a residual circuit breaker is provided the Hirer must make use of it in the interests of public safety.

Any damage caused to the Pavilion as the result of electrical appliances brought into the Pavilion shall be the responsibility of the HIRER. All trailing leads and extensions should be covered in a safety trunking, covered with a safety mat, or securely taped down.

13. Stored equipment

The Town Council accepts no responsibility for any stored equipment or other property brought on to or left at the premises, and all liability for loss or damage is hereby excluded. All equipment and other property (other than stored equipment) must be removed at the end of each hiring or fees will be charged for each day or part of a day at the hire fee per hiring until the same is removed.

The Town Council may use its discretion in any of the following circumstances:

(a) Failure by the Hirer either to pay any charges in respect of stored equipment due and payable or to remove the same within 7 days after the agreed storage period has ended.

(b) Failure by the Hirer to dispose of any property brought on to the premises for the purposes of the hiring. This may result in the Town Clerk disposing of any such items by sale or otherwise on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit and charge the Hirer any costs incurred in storing and selling or otherwise disposing of the same.

14. Smoking

The Hirer shall, and shall ensure that the Hirer's invitees, comply with the prohibition of smoking in public places provisions of the Health Act 2006 and regulations made thereunder. Any person who breaches this provision shall be asked to leave the premises. The Hirer shall ensure that anyone wishing to smoke does so outside and disposes of cigarette ends, matches etc. in a tidy and responsible manner, so as not to cause a fire

15. Accidents and dangerous occurrences

Any failure of equipment belonging to the Pavilion or brought in by the Hirer must be reported as soon as possible. The Hirer must report all accidents involving injury to the public to a member of the Town Clerk as soon as possible and complete the relevant section in the Pavilion's accident book. Certain types of accident or injury must be reported on a special form to the Incident Contact Centre. The Town Clerk will give assistance in completing this form and can provide contact details of the Incident Contact Centre. This is in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

16. Explosives and flammable substances

The hirer shall ensure that:

- Highly flammable substances are not brought into, or used in any part of the premises and that
- No internal decorations of a combustible nature (e.g. polystyrene, cotton wool) shall be erected without the consent of the Town Clerk. No decorations are to be put up near light fittings or heaters.

17. Heating

The Hirer shall ensure that no unauthorised heating appliances shall be used on the premises when open to the public without the consent of the Town Council. Portable Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) heating appliances shall not be used.

18. Animals

The Hirer shall ensure that no animals (including birds) except assistance dogs, or similar, are brought into the premises, other than for a special event agreed to by the Town Clerk. No animals whatsoever are to enter the kitchen at any time.

19. Fly posting

The Hirer shall not carry out or permit fly posting or any other form of unauthorised advertisements for any event taking place at the premises and shall indemnify and keep indemnified each member of the



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accordingly against all actions, claims and proceedings arising from any breach of this condition. Failure to observe this condition may lead to prosecution by the local authority.

20. Sale of Goods

The Hirer shall, if selling goods on the premises, comply with Fair Trading Laws and any code of practice used in connection with such sales. In particular, the Hirer shall ensure that the total prices of all goods and services are prominently displayed, as shall be the organiser's name and address and that any discounts offered are based only on Manufacturers' Recommended Retail Prices.

21. Cancellation

The Town Council reserves the right to cancel this hiring by written notice to the Hirer in the event of:

- the premises being required for use as a Polling Station for a Parliamentary or Local Government election or by-election
- the Town Council reasonably considering that:
 1. such hiring will lead to a breach of licensing conditions, if applicable, or other legal or statutory requirements, or
 2. unlawful or unsuitable activities will take place at the premises as a result of this hiring
 3. the premises becoming unfit for the use intended by the Hirer
 4. an emergency requiring use of the premises as a shelter for the victims of flooding, snowstorm, fire, explosion or those at risk of these or similar disasters.

In any such case the Hirer shall be entitled to a refund of any deposit already paid, but the Town Council shall not be liable to the Hirer for any resulting direct or indirect loss or damages whatsoever.

22. End of Hire

The Hirer shall be responsible for leaving the premises and surrounding area in a clean and tidy condition, properly locked and secured unless directed otherwise and any contents temporarily removed from their usual positions properly replaced, otherwise the Town Council shall be at liberty to make an additional charge.

23. No alterations

No alterations or additions may be made to the premises. No fixtures may be installed or placards, decorations or other articles be attached in any way to any part of the premises without the prior written approval of the Town Council. Any alteration, fixture or fitting or attachment so approved shall at the discretion of the Town Council remain in the premises at the end of the hiring. It will become the property of the Town Council unless removed by the Hirer who must make good to the satisfaction of the Town Council any damage caused to the premises by such removal. Using pins of any description is prohibited.

24. Deposit

A security deposit of £50 against damage or the permission being left in an unacceptable state will be required for all events unless the Town Council specifically decides otherwise. This will be refundable after inspection to ensure that the conditions of hiring have been observed. The deposit is required at the time of booking to secure your booking.

25. Payment

Payment is required 4 weeks before commencement of hire and the preferred payment method is via BACs. Cash is not accepted in any circumstances. Failure to pay may see your booking removed.

26. Inflatables

Bouncy Castles are strictly prohibited.

27. No Rights

The Hiring Agreement constitutes permission only to use the premises and confers no tenancy or other right of occupation on the Hirer.

HIRER FIRE HAZARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Hirer is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of fire and injury to all occupants. These precautions include: –
- Fire safety checks before admission of public and before leaving (see overleaf)
- Acquainting themselves with the action to be taken in the event of fire (see attached fire instructions). This includes pavilion evacuation and calling the fire service
- Identifying the location of all fire alarms, fire extinguishers and escape routes, and keeping them clear always.
- Knowing how to operate the emergency exit doors
- Calling the fire service if a fire breaks out, however slight, and subsequently informing a member of the Town Council.
- Not permitting any real flames or known obvious fire hazards to be used/brought on the premises without permission from the Town Council. Specifically, no highly inflammable, explosive, or hazardous substances, nor portable paraffin or gas heater should be allowed anywhere on the premises.
- Not permitting any cylinders for the storage of air or other gases or liquids under pressure to be brought into the premises, nor lasers anywhere on the premises without permission from the Town Council
- To ensure that any decorations used are of non-flammable or fireproofed material.

The entire premises are a NON-SMOKING AREA

All hirers of the Pavilion must carry out the following Fire Safety checks:

Before admission of public:

- All exit doors, including those with push-bar mechanism tested and in good working order.
- Escape routes free from obstruction and available for use.
- Any fire doors closed and not wedged or propped open.
- Fire extinguishers in place and unobstructed.
- No combustible storage in areas open to the public.
- Check there is no obvious fire hazard in, or near, the building.

Before leaving:

- Search for smouldering fires or cigarettes left burning



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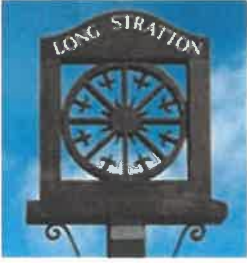
Website: www.longstrattoncouncil.info

- Switch off all kitchen electrical appliances at wall socket e.g. hob, microwave, tea urn, kettles.
- Empty all waste bins, remove the waste from the premises and fit new waste bin liners.
- Close properly both exit doors (ensure lockbolts engaged) and internal fire doors
- If the hirer intends to clear up the morning following a function (only permissible by prior arrangement with the Town Council and if pavilion is not being used the next morning) all bags of rubbish including those in the waste bins must be removed from the building immediately after the event.
- All electrical appliances (e.g. Disco equipment, amplifiers, lighting systems) and any alcohol brought into the pavilion for the function must be removed from the building at the end of the function. Anything left in the pavilion is at hirer's own risk.

Any person discovering a fire:

- **WARN OTHERS** – shout **FIRE!** If you cannot be heard, flash the lights to get attention.
- **SOUND THE ALARM** – break the glass at nearest fire alarm (one next to each exit)
- **LEAVE THE BUILDING** – by nearest exit in an orderly way; close doors behind you
- **ASSEMBLY POINT** – next to the Children's playground opposite the Pavilion. **DO NOT BLOCK ANY EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS.**
- **DO NOT TACKLE THE FIRE UNLESS YOU ARE TRAINED TO DO SO**
- **CALL THE FIRE SERVICE IMMEDIATELY**
 - **DIAL 999**, then give the operator the number of the phone and ask for Fire. When the Fire Service answers speak distinctly **"FIRE AT LONG STRATTON PAVILION, MANOR ROAD, NR15 2XR"**
- **GIVE THE ADDRESS** – Long Stratton Pavilion, Manor Road, Long Stratton, NR15 2XR
- **DON'T END CALL UNTIL FIRE SERVICE HAS REPEATED THE ADDRESS**
- All Mobile networks accept Emergency Calls on **999** or **112**
- There is no public telephone on the premises or nearby
- Once the pavilion has been evacuated (check especially the toilet areas), **DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO RETURN TO THE BUILDING** for any reason until authorised to do so by the Fire Service.
- On Fire Service arrival, the person in charge of the pavilion/function must report to the Officer in Charge that all persons are safe or should inform him/her of the last known position of anyone missing.

- The Town Clerk to be notified at the earliest opportunity on 01508 530524.



Long Stratton Town Council

Pavilion, Manor Road Playing Fields, Manor Road, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XR

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Long Stratton Town Council Key Control Policy

General Policy

- Keys remain the property of Long Stratton Town Council while in the possession of the key holder.
- The key holder may be either a person or an organisation
- Keys are issued for the sole use of the key holder.
- Keys must not be duplicated
- Keys must not be loaned or transferred to any other person/organisation by the key holder.
- Any person/organisation found to have caused damage to a lock or door hardware will be held responsible for all costs needed to rectify the damage
- Unauthorised duplication, use or transfer of any key may result in the cancelling of the hire of the building.

Long Stratton Town Council's Responsibility is

- To maintain key, and associated deposit, control records.
- To securely store all spare keys.
- To evaluate key authorisations to ensure no unacceptable risk.
- To ensure that key deposits are collected and refunded
- To ensure that key deposits are kept in a secure manner
- To provide a receipt for the key deposit
- To provide new, duplicate or replacement keys as and when necessary.
- To agree a value of the key deposit

Key Holder's Responsibility is

- To sign Key Holder Agreement Form for each key received.
- To pay the key deposit in cash
- To maintain responsibility for keys issued to them, even if loaned to others within the organisation which they represent.
- To report loss or theft of keys to the Town Council
- To return all keys when no longer needed.

Deposit Charges

- Existing long term building users £10 per key, refundable on the return of the Key
- New or one-off bookings £20 per key, refundable on the return of the key
- The Town Council reserves the right to apply these charges as they see fit

Long Stratton Town Council - Key Control Policy Key Holder Agreement Form

Date: _____

Name of Key Holder: _____

Name of Organisation (if applicable): _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Key Number issued: _____

I acknowledge receipt of, and take full responsibility for the key while in the possession of myself or the organisation I represent I understand that any key issued to me is provided under the terms of the Old School Rooms Key Control Policy

_____ Signature of Key Holder

Receipt of key deposit in the amount of £ _____ is acknowledged. Key number issued:

Signature of the Town Council Representative