



WILLAND PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Willand Parish Council is a local authority funded largely by public money, and 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, Willand Parish Council (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 includes arrangements for the management of risk.

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

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual accounts and accords with proper practice as set out in the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners' Guide (England).

THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council

The Council has appointed a Chairman, who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings. For the year ending 31st March 2025 this was Councillor Mr Barry Warren.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approved a budget for the financial year 2025-2026 at its meeting held on Thursday, 19th December 2024 (***minute number 1912/04***). The Council approved the level of precept for the financial year 2025-2026 at its meeting on the 9th January 2025 (***minute number 0901/09***).

The Council and its Committees, where applicable, monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures and budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters.

The minutes of the meetings are circulated to all members of the Council and are published on the Parish Council's website www.willand-pc.gov.uk

The full Council met on a monthly basis in 2024 -2025 with the exception of August and receives the minutes of any Committees and ratifies the decisions therein. The Council held an additional budget meeting in December. The Council also monitors progress by receiving relevant reports from Councillors and the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate budget unless approved by the Council. The Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which must be done imminently for safety reasons or to avoid further damage, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,000. The Clerk shall report the action to Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's adviser 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 advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments

All expenditure must be authorised by the Council, or by the Clerk or the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman within the limits set out in the Financial Regulations.

All payments and receipts are entered onto the Council's Accounting System, Scribe, and reported to Council on a monthly basis at the Council meeting.

A list of all payments is kept with the minutes of the Council meeting at which they are approved. Three of the Designated Councillors authorise the invoices by checking them against the list and initialling the list and all the accompanying invoices, and approval of payments is minuted at each Full Council meeting as part of the "Authorisation of Payments" item.

Income

All income is received and banked in the Council's name in a timely manner and reported to the Council.

A copy of the Council's receipts and payments report is published on the Council's website www.willand-pc.gov.uk with the Council agenda, as a supporting paper on a monthly basis.

Contracts

Procedures as to contracts are laid down in the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Council oversee all contract procedures.

Risk Assessments / Risk Management

The Clerk maintains a Risk Register which is updated on a regular basis and reported annually to Council. The Clerk will ensure appropriate mitigation, controls and actions are in place for all identified risks. Any high risk issues identified on a risk assessment will be reported to the Council for its consideration and action.

Internal Audit

The Council has appointed Hillary Corcoran as its independent internal auditor for 2024-2025 who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.

External Audit

The Council's appointed external auditor for 2024–2025 is PKF Littlejohn LLP. Following completion of the external audit the annual Certificate of Audit is provided, which is presented to the Council. The Council's notice of conclusion of audit & annual return is also published on the Council's website.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Willand Parish Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is monitored and informed by:

- The Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
- The work of the Independent Internal Auditor
- The External Auditors in their annual letter
- Those elected Members with designated responsibility within this area

Any concerns about the effectiveness of the system of internal control are investigated and action taken as appropriate.

We are satisfied on all accounts that our arrangements are effective and meet expected standards. Council approved the Statement of Internal Control on 13th February 2025.

(Chairman)

Date

(Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)

Date