



GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

For the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

1. Scope of the Responsibility

- 1.1. Goring-on-Thames Parish Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2. 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

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The system of internal control is in place at the Council from date of approval for the year ending 31 March 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts in accordance with proper practice.

3. The Internal Control Environment

3.1. The Council

- 3.1.1. The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.
- 3.1.2. The Council has appointed 4 members, including the Council Chairman, to a Finance Committee to meet monthly to work with the Responsible Financial Officer in the management of the Council's financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with Council's finances and property.
- 3.1.3. The Finance Committee reviews Council's obligations and objectives and proposes budgets for the following year at its October or November meeting. The November or December meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.
- 3.1.4. The Council monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters.
- 3.1.5. The full Council normally meets 10 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Clerk.
- 3.1.6. The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

3.2. Clerk to the Council & Responsible Financial Officer

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.

3.3. Payments

All payments are reported to the Finance Committee for approval. Two members of the Committee must authorise all payments.

3.4. Risk Assessments / Risk Management

The Council carries out regular risk assessment in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

3.5. Internal Audit

The Council will appoint an independent Internal Auditor for the year 2023/2024 who will report to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal controls and risk management. The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually.

3.6. External Audit

The Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments organisation appoints an External Auditor for all the Parish Councils within a County. The Council's appointed External Auditor is Moore until further notice. Following completion of the External Audit the annual certificate of Audit is provided, which is presented to the Council.

4. Review of Effectiveness

4.1. The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal controls. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls is monitored and informed by:

4.1.1. the Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer

4.1.2. the Finance Committee

4.1.3. the work of the Independent Internal Auditor

4.1.4. the External Auditors through the Annual Return and their annual letter

4.1.5. the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

5. Review of the Statement

This statement was accepted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 13 May 2024 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed:

Dated: 13 May 2024

_____, Chair of the Council