



## Clerk Report

### a) Bank Account

Unity Trust Account set-up - Clerk has submitted application form to open new account and will collect signatures to send the submission form at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Unity Trust offer an account switching service which enables existing direct debits to be switched to the new account and any credits paid to the old account would be automatically re-routed for 3 years. As the financial controls on the existing Lloyds TSB account are not satisfactory a full switch has been chosen.

Lloyds TSB had made an error when changing the Council's address and therefore post had been sent to an address in Lichfield which had been the reason for the delay in setting up the Clerks access to Internet Banking. On 7<sup>th</sup> February the resident from the address Lloyds TSB had incorrectly used contacted me to advise of this as they had spent hours on the phone to Lloyds TSB to tell them of this error yet had received more post from them since. I contacted Lloyds TSB immediately to advise of this error and to lodge a complaint.

Lloyds TSB advised that this was indeed their error apologised and advised that £75 would be paid into the WOPC current account as compensation for the inconvenience. The address issues have now been resolved and the block placed on the account due to returned post has now been lifted. The Bank Mandate changes have not been actioned due to an anomaly in a signature on the form compared to the original mandate.

Lloyds TSB Internet banking details should have been sent to Clerk in 3-5 days, card reader and card had arrived but pin number yet to arrive.

### b) Mobile Phone

Vodafone contract due to end on 08/03/22 and the Parish Council telephone number will become PAYG. The telephone number can then be transferred to another network using a PAC code.

Clerk would recommend switching to 1p mobile. There is no contract and businesses can have unlimited calls and texts for £3 per 30 days. [Business accounts \(1pmobile.com\)](https://www.1pmobile.com)

Clerk works from home or at the Pavilion and has access to wi-fi at both locations so very rarely uses any mobile data. Mobile data can be disabled on device to stop this being used in error and incurring charges.

Consideration to be given to whether caretakers should also be provided with mobile devices. The Clerk frequently needs to contact the caretakers for day-to-day management and often needs to request whether caretakers are OK to have their personal numbers shared with suppliers and hirers.

### c) Internal Audit

Kim Bedford had carried out a mid-year review for Water Orton Parish Council on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

Initial findings had been as follows:

Five committees for a medium sized Council was excessive and a restructure should be considered after the elections.

Move to Unity Trust for dual authorisations welcomed as current arrangements do not offer adequate internal control.



Bowling Club, paperwork regarding the building and any lease relating to this should be found if possible.

Members should consider any conflicts of interest they may have with various clubs and ensure register of interests are up to date.

Risk Assessments particularly for village caretakers and cleaner required for all aspects of their roles, Council should consider providing PPE where required and offering adequate training i.e., manual handling. Watering planters for an outside organisation used considerable staff resources, consider reviewing job descriptions and remit of work in accordance with PC priorities maintaining own assets. Review arrangements with outside organisations.

HR company expenditure includes commercial legal protection insurance (Irwell) Recommended that we ask Croner to cease this policy and if not possible ask BHIB to remove this aspect of the Council's insurance for the duration of the agreement with Croner to avoid double insurance premiums for this. Croner 5 year agreement entered into on 29/01/2020 as per council resolution on 22/01/2020.

Issues for audit:

SO & FR's under review currently, documents acceptable at present. Must review SO's in year.

Risk Management Policy reviewed / ratified in Jan 2023 (in-year) document acceptable, understands Council wish to review more thoroughly

Asset Register – existing register does not resemble figures on AGAR. Assets have been revalued, does not show acquisition values. Need to look to restate previous figures.

No petty cash although assertion F ticked Yes by previous Internal Auditor, should read N/A

Registers of Interest required and to be displayed on website

Reserves need to be built up to allow for the replacement and maintenance of assets

Advise Council that legally they must ensure they are only maintaining assets they own unless they have a formal agreement in place with principal authority.

#### d) Van

Payment of £322.54 received from previous Clerk for the DVLA Vehicle Tax Refund £145.00 & the Swinton Van Insurance refund £177.54.

Clerk has contacted Swinton Van Insurance as on receipt of documents from them they are now referring to the main driver on documentation (one of the caretakers) and not to the Parish Council as a corporate body and Clerk is concerned that they would then only speak to the caretaker about the insurance policy. The policy is in the name of Water Orton Parish Council. The insurance company have said the policy is set up correctly as it is and that they will put a note on the system that I am the key contact for WOPC, they have advised all emails will come to [clerkwopc@gmail.com](mailto:clerkwopc@gmail.com) and they will speak to me when required.

Council may wish to consider using a different broker (one that is used to dealing with local authorities) when the policy is due for renewal next year.

#### e) Training

Clerk has attended WALC training course, Planning for Elections on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023, this was useful and will enable her to provide the relevant information to Councillors and prospective candidates in due course.



Clerk has booked one of the caretakers on the playground inspection course on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The other caretaker was checking shifts at his other role to see if he would be able to attend. Both caretakers have been pleased to be offered the training.

#### f) Co-options

Clerk has reached out to previous applicants and re-advertised on social media for further candidates to fill the remaining casual vacancy.

#### g) Coleshill Post

Council to consider whether they wish to publish any article for the next edition of the Coleshill Post due out on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The pre-election period begins on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 so any article must observe the guidance below: [A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period | Local Government Association](#)

The Council could consider publishing a general article to appeal for candidates to step forward but need to consider if there is capacity to produce an article.

During the pre-election period it is safer for the Council to keep communications to a minimum.

#### h) Correspondence

- i) General correspondence from WCC, NWBC, NALC, WALC, HS2 and other organisations circulated to Councillors & communicated with residents via website & social media where possible.