



FINSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

Email: clerk@finstallparishcouncil.gov.uk

tel: 07958 450482

Website: <https://finstallparishcouncil.gov.uk>

NOTICE OF ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday 7th May 2024, 7.30pm at Finstall Village Hall

The meeting is open to members of the public who are welcome to address the council at agenda item 5 (Public Forum) to put comments and questions to the council regarding this agenda or for future consideration. Individual speaking time may be restricted at the Chairman's discretion, which also applies to any non-member representations at any other time in this meeting.

Summons

Members are summoned to attend this meeting to transact the business on the agenda. Members are expected to be mindful of the parish council's statutory duties with respect to the effective management of risk, equality, biodiversity, health and safety, crime and disorder.

Gill Lungley

Gill Lungley, Clerk/RFO

1st May 2024

The seven elected members of the parish council are:
Norman Hewer, Malcom Molloy, Wendy Molloy, Christine Orr-Cooper,
Rosemarie Ryan, Caroline Spencer, Will Taylor (Chairman).

A G E N D A

- 1. To elect the Chairman for the 2024/25 civic year.**
The Chairman will sign their Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chair.
- 2. To record absences and receive any apologies for absence.**
- 3. Declarations of interest:**
 - a) All councillors are reminded to keep their Register of Interests up to date; it is available [online](#).
 - b) All councillors must declare any interest ie. Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), Other Registerable Interest (ORI) or Non-Registerable Interest (NRI), in items on the agenda and their nature. In keeping with the council's [Code of Conduct](#), members must leave the meeting during the discussion relating to the item in which the interest has been declared unless a dispensation has been requested and granted.
- 4. To consider any request from a councillor for a dispensation to be allowed to stay in the meeting after declaring an interest.** Such request, in writing, must be given to the Clerk before the meeting starts.

5. To elect the vice-Chair for the 2024/25 civic year.

6. Public Forum.

- a) An opportunity for members of the public to raise matters of interest or concern relating to this agenda or for future meetings.
- b) County and District Councillors, Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team, and Community Representatives are invited to present an update on their activities.

6. To complete annual business in keeping with the council's Standing Orders:

- i. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council; meeting held 02/04/2024, copy available [online here](#).
- ii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
- iii. Review of arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- iv. Review of representation on Bromsgrove Area Committee, WorcsCALC.
- v. Review of inventory of land and other assets.
- vi. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover.
- vii. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies.
- viii. Review of the council's complaints procedure.
- ix. Review of policies and procedures relating to Freedom of Information and GDPR.
- x. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press /media.
- xi. Review of expenditure incurred under the General Power of Competence.
- xii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

7. Planning Development. To comment on any planning application consultations received from Bromsgrove District Council.

8. FINANCE

- a) To consider and authorise payments and note receipts (schedule attached, p3)
- b) To note the latest bank reconciliation (p3).
- c) To certify Finstall Parish Council meets the annual audit exemption requirements (p4).
- d) To note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24 audit (p5).
- e) To agree responses to the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 audit (p6).
- f) To agree the Annual Accounting Statements for 2023/24 audit (p7).
- g) To notify exercise of public rights with regard to audit to start 03/06/2024 – 12/07/2024.

9. Clerk's reports and correspondence received, for information:

As in attached report on page 8.

10. To consider and decide upon the following:

- a) Review of lease arrangements at Penmanor Recreation Ground; update to proposals.
- b) To appoint a contractor to undertake the tree survey at Penmanor Recreation Ground; additional contractors have been asked to provide a quote.
- c) To consider adopting the Civility and Respect Pledge; see page 9.
- d) To consider contributing Finstall news to The Village magazine; deadline for June is 10/05.

11. Members to raise items for discussion at next meeting.

12. Date, time and venue of next meeting:

Tuesday 4th June 2024, 7.30pm at Finstall Village Hall.

Agenda item 8a

Payments for authorisation

Vno	To	Reason	Gross amount	VAT paid
Following to be paid by direct debit or Standing Order during May:				
04	Scribe / Starboard Systems	Bookkeeping software May 2024	14.40	2.40
05	Staff	M/soft office software May 2024	10.32	1.72
06	Staff	Salary, May 2024	433.42	0.00
Following to be paid by online payment following approval at this meeting:				
07	Finstall Village Hall	Printing notices for Annual PM	36.00	0.00
08	Worcestershire CALC	Annual subscription with NALC subs	512.02	77.89
09	RoSPA Play Safety	Annual inspection of play equipment	141.60	23.60
10	Brian Lucas	Litter-picking support	20.25	0.00
11	Clear Insurance M/ment Ltd	Additional premium (chain of office)	16.86	0.00
12	Clear Insurance M/ment Ltd	Annual insurance premium 2024/25	665.69	0.00
13	DKE Audit	Annual internal audit	292.40	0.00
14	Bromsgrove DC	Lease of Penmanor Rec, annual rent	5.00	0.00
Receipts:				
From Worcestershire County Council: Lengthsman reimbursement (March 2024)			£170.00	

The Clerk, as RFO, confirms each invoice has been checked prior to presentation for payment approval. Each invoice is available for inspection, and will be attached to the online payments schedule circulated to all members after being signed by two members in the meeting.

Agenda item 8b

Bank reconciliation to 30/04/2024

For period 01/04/2024 – 30/04/2024		
Opening bank balances 01/04/2024	19,771.86	
Add actual receipts for year to date	170.00	
Less authorised payments for year to date	-892.14	
Total	A	£19,049.72
Bank balances as at 30/04/2024		
Unity Trust Bank	8,549.72	
Bromsgrove DC Loan account	10,500.00	
Less unrepresented payments	0.00	
Total	B	£19,049.72
		A=B=balance

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2023/24 Form 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2024, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, provided that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2024 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than 30 June 2024 notifying the external auditor.

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certifies that during the financial year 2023/24, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year or total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed £25,000

Total annual gross income for the authority 2023/24: £18,441 R AMOUNT £00,000

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2023/24: £17,094 R AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be unable to certify itself as exempt, so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority is unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt and it must submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of £210 +VAT will be payable.

By signing this Certificate of Exemption you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2020
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2022/23), the external auditor has not:
 - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
 - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
 - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
 - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
 - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If the above statements apply and the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor either by email or by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage* before 1 July 2024.

Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer	Date	I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:
SIGNATURE REQUIRED	DD/MM/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by Chair	Date	as recorded in minute reference:
SIGNATURE REQUIRED	DD/MM/YYYY	MINUTE REFERENCE

Generic email address of Authority	Telephone number
clerk@fininstallparishcouncil.gov.uk <small>GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS</small>	07958450482 <small>NUMBER</small>

*Published web address

<https://fininstallparishcouncil.gov.uk/> AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2024. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 + VAT.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Finstall Parish Council

www.finstallparishcouncil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, 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 2023/24 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.	✓		
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.			✓
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 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")	✓		
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 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

04/01/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Duncan Edwards (DKE Audit Services)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

18/04/2024

*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 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

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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 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes	No	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>
				✓	

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair	SIGNATURE REQUIRED
Clerk	SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)

The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.	Yes	No
	✓	

<https://fininstallparishcouncil.gov.uk/> AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

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	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	20,804	19,370	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.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	8,090	15,158	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,125	3,282	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	3,065	4,472	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.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	8,584	13,567	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	19,370	19,772	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	19,370	19,772	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.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	23,998	23,037	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.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 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

G Lunsley REQUIRED

Date 18/04/2024

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

DDMMYYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Agenda item 9

Clerk's reports and correspondence received up to 01/05/2024, for information.

Updates to ongoing matters:
Re 06/02/2024 min 10i - Traffic concerns. VAS camera: no progress to report.
Re 06/02/2024 min 10e – Installation of litter bins in the parish No further progress to report. The Lengthsman has commented that a bin is much needed near the Upper Gambolds Lane canal bridge.
Lengthsman Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overgrown hedge north-east corner Finstall Road / Walnut Lane.• Overgrown hedge south-west corner Finstall Road / Walnut Lane.• All drains blocked along Finstall Road (detritus in gulleys) / Alcester Road.• Flooding at Stoke Cross crossroads.• Direction sign at junction Dusthouse Lane / Upper Gambolds Lane is loose.
Penmanor Rec RoSPA inspection. The annual report has been received and shared with council members. No items of great concern, but some equipment and benches need to be painted.
<u>TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL CONFERENCE (REMINDER)</u> Wednesday 12 June 2024 from 6 – 9pm To be held at Wyre Forest District Council Offices, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 7WF 6 to 7 pm - information market place to speak to officers and partners on a range of topics 7 to 9pm – conference with presentations from a range of speakers including Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service and representatives from the council to cover such areas as highways and the digital switchover.
Contact details for Worcester Birmingham Canal Society have been received.
Correspondence received and circulated to members:
Weekly planning updates for the Bromsgrove district.
Training opportunities for councillors and clerks
Ready-to-fly flags for upcoming events (commercial circular)
Worcs CC Local Nature Survey, now closed.
Monthly Fraud Bulletin from West Mercia Police
Bromsgrove and Redditch WorcsCALC area meeting held 17/04/2024 (late notice)
WorcsCALC update 24-02
Worcs CC Air Quality Survey , online. Closes 12/05/2024.
Drainage report, feedback from WorcsCC – system overwhelmed; gully cleaning ongoing.
Free training from Citizens Advice Bromsgrove to local volunteers and staff who usually assist and support people within the Bromsgrove community.

Definition of Civility and Respect

Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.

Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people’s feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

By our council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that our council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Signing up is a simple process, which requires councils to register and agree to the following statements:

Statement	Tick to agree
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.	
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors.	
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme.	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	