GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT AND REPORT

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Gislingham Parish 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.

The Parish Council is 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 on-going 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.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

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

The full council meets 12 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Chair, Parish Clerk, and Responsible Finance Officer.

The council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See Internal Control Report below.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:
The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. A Responsible Financial Officer is appointed 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 payments are reported to the council for approval. Two members of the council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council. No officer of the Council can sign cheques. Where delegation permits, as per s.101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Council's Financial Regulations, a report will be provided to the next full Council.

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

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:
The Council reviews its risk assessment annually in March, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:
The council appoints an independent and competent internal auditor who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of it's:

- ✓ Records
- ✓ Procedures
- ✓ Systems
- ✓ Internal Control
- ✓ Regulations
- ✓ Risk Management

External Audit:
The council's external auditors, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the
Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS
The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.

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Chair RFO/Clerk

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit.

Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control: -

'The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control…. care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.'

As part of its internal control, the [Town/ Parish Council] has appointed a Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	**TEST DONE** **Yes or No**	**COMMENTS check Documents and initial**
Ensuring an up-to-date Register of Assets		
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets		
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover		
Annual review of financial risk		
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations		
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders		
Regular reporting on performance by contractors		
Annual review of contracts (where appropriate)		

Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed		
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure		
Recording in the minutes or appendices of the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved		
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted		
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked		
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to District Council notification		
Contracts of employment for staff		
Contract annually reviewed		
Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation		
PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer		
VAT correctly accounted for VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook		
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council		
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council		
Compliance with DCLG Guide *Open & Accountable Local Government* 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports		
Compliance with Local Transparency Code Of 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £500		
Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements Are the following in place: • Audit / Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention & Disposal Policies		
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping		
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality		
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members		
Declaration of Acceptance of Office		

Date of review system of Internal Controls ……..

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name:……**Signature:**……..

Position: …….

Report submitted to Council (date)…….

(minute reference) …….

Next review of system of Internal Controls due (date) ……

Additional comments by reviewer:

Signed: *C Tranter* **Chair**

Approved by Gislingham Parish Council on 16th March 2026

Date of next review March 2027