

Present for SPC: Mick Westwood, Parish Clerk; Deborah Jenkins, Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer

1. Investment Strategy

TK said he could not advise on the strategy as he was not a registered adviser on investments. MW explained KALC's advice on the requirement for local councils to have regard to HM Government's statutory guidance and that a policy was compulsory where investments exceeded a threshold (£100k) and best practice if over £10k.

All noted that the current deposit protection scheme protected balances up to £85k in one banking group. To protect all SPC's balances would entail opening another account in an institution outside Lloyds Bank Group.

2. General Data Protection Regulations

We updated TK on the preparations being made for compliance with GDPR, notably the file-pruning, self-audit, review of contacts and mailing lists and proposal to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO). It was noted that HM Government had proposed an amendment to the regulations which would mean it would not be compulsory for a parish council to appoint a DPO, although it was considered to be best practice.

3. New Bank Account

We advised TK: the new banking arrangements were working well; one signatory had been removed and a replacement was being formalised. TK commented that as authorising councillors were accessing the Parish Council's on-line banking facility via their own devices, it was essential that they ensured their device security was fully operational and up to date. TK questioned whether it was necessary for authorisers to have visibility of deposit account balances. We could usefully review financial regulations in the light of our initial experience of on-line banking.

4. Staff Costs

It was noted that in February 2018 SPC had agreed to settle staff's accumulated hours to January 2018. Although staff had been requested to work only contracted hours since then, both MW and DJ had worked in excess of these hours. Time sheets are still being maintained. We advised TK that councillors had decided to look into further options to address working hours.

TK commented that SPC's publication of staff costs as a single amount was convenient but in reality they were attributable to a wide range of activities, services and projects.

5. Possible Changes to Working Practices

We informed TK: last year SPC had reviewed its meeting cycle without making any change and it was possible that the subject would be revisited; we were looking at setting up a facility to enable office staff to work remotely.

6. Financial Statements

TK undertook to return the reviewed files on 10th May. He advised that, save for specifically allocated expenditure, the budget carry-forward figure should be transferred to General Reserve. He said he would also send a short note covering issues discussed.

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