WILLINGALE PARISH COUNCIL

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2020/2021 AGAR - Overview

As Councillors will be aware, all Parish Councils must complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return or "AGAR". This year, as for last year we are an "exempt authority" because our total income/expenditure was less than £25,000, which means we do not need to have our financial statements externally audited (saving us a cost of £200 + VAT).

However, an *internal* Audit, remains a mandatory requirement, and our Clerk has arranged this with an independent third party, Karen Weare, who has made the necessary declaration on Page 4, Part 2 of the AGAR.

It is a mandatory requirement to publish our AGAR on the Parish Council website under the "Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities" and the Code recommends that there are *"numerical and narrative explanations available for significant variances*" in the accounting statements. For Willingale Parish Council the financial summary looks like this:

	Year Ended 3/20	Year Ended 3/21	Difference
Precept	4,985	5,195	210
Total Receipts	4,248	3,767	-481
Staff Costs	1,876	1,982	106
Other Costs	6,686	3,406	-3,280

The year under review was an unusual one, due to the impact of the Covid Pandemic on a range of areas, most notably the need to meet "virtually", and the decision during 2020 to suspend the publication and doorstep delivery of "What's on in Willingale". The key changes this year are explained below:

Income

- **Precept:** was up £210 reflecting a 1% increase in the Band D precept, coupled with a change in the composition of the housing stock. The overall effect was a circa 4% increase in precept income.
- **Total Receipts:** includes advertising income and VAT refunds. The former was down by £433 due to some general attrition in advertising and the non-publication of the magazine, and VAT refunds were a little lower.

Expenditure

- **Staff Costs + £210:** These were up slightly due to the Clerk's pay award in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services recommendations.
- **Other costs - £3,280:** The underlying cause was spread across many areas, but mostly:
  - Room hire was down £117 due to the Pandemic.
  - Grants were down £654 as 2019/20 included a grant to the village hall.
  - Verge cutting was down £900 as the second cut was not charged for due to quality issues.
  - Training costs were down £735 as 2019/20 included the costs of training new councillors.
  - Magazine printing costs down £178 for the reasons explained above.
  - VAT costs were £500 lower.

Meeting Procedures

In line with statutory guidance, it is recommended that the Council receives and notes the internal audit report prior to approving the annual governance statement, and thereafter the accounts themselves.

After the meeting, the accounts are published on the website together with a notice (also placed on the noticeboard) setting out the period during which members of the public may exercise their rights to inspect the accounts.

David Stokes, Chair
4th May 2021