

NEWTON & NOSS PARISH COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL
FOR THE YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Newton & Noss Parish Council (the Council) is a local authority funded largely by public money, and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Newton & Noss Parish Council is also 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.

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 ongoing 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.

Internal controls are set up by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) but it falls on the Council members to ensure that they have a degree of control and understanding of those controls. Controls will include the checking of routine financial procedures, examination of financial comparisons and the recording of assets and liabilities. It will also include identification of risk, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised (and the impact should they be realised), and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been and will be in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2016 and up to the date of approval of the annual accounts.

THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council

The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful. The Chairman signs all the pages of the minutes.

Decisions made should be within the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations laid down and approved by the Council.

The Council has appointed a Budget working group. The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves a budget for the following year at its December or January meeting.

The Council has appointed a Risk Assessments working group. The group reviews financial risk assessment together with insurance coverage and arrangements and reports to the Council.

The Council has appointed an Accounts Inspection working group which conducts an inspection of the accounts and supporting papers on a quarterly basis.

Members of the working groups monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters.

The full Council meets twenty one times each year. It monitors progress by receiving relevant reports from the working groups and the Parish Clerk.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

The Council receives a monthly financial statement which it approves at its Council meetings. Payments are made in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Clerk has delegated authority to incur expenditure of up to £1000 on repairs, replacement or other work of extreme urgency.

Payments are checked by three Councillors at Council Meetings. Two Councillors (out of four named signatories) sign all cheques. The signatories also initial the cheque stubs. The Councillors checking the payments ensure that the cheque agrees with the amount of the invoice and the payee named on the invoice. The full Council authorises the payments made for each month.

At the year end, the Accounts Inspection working group ensures that the cash book totals are reconciled to the year end bank statement.

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer 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.

Internal Audit

The Council has appointed an independent internal auditor to the Council of the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.

The independent internal auditor will inspect the accounts at the year end and will complete page 5 of the Annual Return. The independent internal auditor will write a separate report to the Council detailing any findings they might have.

The report of the independent internal auditor is copied to all members of the Council and considered as an agenda item at the next meeting. Recommendations from the report will be recorded in the minutes.

External Audit

The Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, appointed by the Audit Commission for five years from 2012/2013, will submit an External Auditor's Report, which will be presented to the Council.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually by the Council. 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 and the Council must approve the Statement of Internal Control.

SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

No internal control issues were identified during the financial year to 31st March 2015.

EXTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

There were no matters raised on the Annual Return for the financial year to 31st March 2015

Mrs .Alison Ansell.
(Chairman)

Mrs Shona McDonough
(Responsible Financial Officer / Clerk)

Internal control procedures reviewed and agreed by Newton & Noss Parish Council 14 /1/16.
Statement of Internal Control approved and adopted by Newton & Noss Parish Council 14/1/16.