

**LAWHITTON PARISH COUNCIL  
STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL  
FOR THE YEAR 2025 - 2026**

**SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Lawhitton Parish 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, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Lawhitton Parish Council (the Council) is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control that 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.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council from the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual accounts and accords with proper practice as set out in the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices (March 2019 Edition)

**THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT**

**The Council**

The Council reviewed its obligations and objectives and approved a budget for the financial year 2025-2026 at its meeting held in November 2024. This meeting of the Council also approved the level of Precept for the financial year 2025-2026.

The full Council meets on a bi-monthly basis and monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. Progress is monitored by discussion and by receiving relevant reports from the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate revenue budget unless a virement has been approved by the Council. The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to the limit set in the Lawhitton Parish Council Financial Regulations or within the Scheme of Delegation. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

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

**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 also 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.

**Payments**

All expenditure must be authorised by the Council or by the Clerk after consultation with the appropriate Chair. The list of orders is available for inspection by any member of the Council on demand.

All payments and receipts are entered onto the Council's Accounting Spreadsheet. A copy of all receipt and payment information is made available at each Council meeting and is presented for inspection at the meeting together with the bank reconciliation. A monthly budget sheet is presented with the agenda.

Three members of the Council authorise payments, after the Clerk/RFO sets them up. The signatories check against any relevant invoice. Any Direct Debit or Standing Order payment is reviewed annually or on a change of circumstance. One standing order is currently in place.

### **Contracts**

Procedures as to the contracts are laid down in the Council's Standing Orders and in the Council's Financial Regulations.

### **Risk Assessments / Risk Management**

The Council carries out regular risk assessments to record risks and related health and safety, employment and insurance issues. The Clerk or Councillors will report on risk assessment to the Council for its consideration and action when appropriate. The Council has an Internal Risk Register and an Asset Risk Register. Since September 2024, the Council store and back up all electronic files on a monthly basis using Google Drive and an external Hard Drive.

The Council appointed Mrs. Dennis as an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.

### **External Audit**

The Council's appointed external auditor under the new Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments System Ltd is PKF Littlejohn.

### **REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is monitored by:

- The Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
- The work of the Independent Internal Auditor
- The External Auditors (if applicable)
- Those elected Members with designated responsibility within this area

Any concerns about the effectiveness of the system of internal control are investigated and action taken as appropriate.

The Council through the Responsible Finance Officer has the responsibility of reviewing the effectiveness of the Internal Audit function and has taken account of the guidance provided to it. We are satisfied on all accounts that our arrangements are effective and meet expected standards.

Lawhitton Parish Council approved the 2025 - 26 Statement of Internal Control on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025

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**Chairperson – Lawhitton Parish Council**

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**Parish Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer**