



Simpson and Ashland Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Meeting and Annual Parish meeting held on
4 June 2018 at 8.00p.m., Simpson Village Hall

Part one – Celebration of the year

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Welcome and Celebration:

The Chair, Cllr Pye welcomed those residents and others who had come along to the Parish Council Annual meeting and gave a warm welcome to the 2018 Annual Parish meeting.

23 Parishioners were present, together with MKC Councillors Peter McDonald, Terry Baines and Rick Brackenbury.

Cllr Pye then provided a short overview of the following annual report:

Report for the Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM), provides the opportunity to look back over the last year or so but also to look forward to what will happen with Simpson & Ashland over the coming twelve month period. It also provides the opportunity for the Parish Council to formally thank everybody who has been involved in the life of the parish, for their inputs and efforts. What residents across Simpson and Ashland do day in and day out to enhance this part of Milton Keynes is greatly appreciated and I and all Cllrs would like to thank everybody for what they do, much of which is not always visible but has a real impact on those who live, visit or work in the area. And it is worth noting that the parish itself has changed over the last twelve months and will continue to do so going forward. And this change is not only in terms of what can be seen, as in ongoing developments of the physical space, but also in the services that we as a community need both now and going forward, as well as the role that we all play in supporting our friends and neighbours and the wider community.

In terms of physical developments in the area, we are now hopefully moving to the point at which the Ashland estate will be fully complete- current estimates give an end date of the last week in July. The journey to completion has been a very long and challenging one. Simpson & Ashland Parish Council (SAPC) has continued to work with the relevant agencies such as Milton Keynes Council (MKC), the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and Paul Newman New Homes Ltd (the developer) to push for completion, and have been supported by Cllr Peter McDonald (one of our ward Cllrs). The meeting in autumn 2017, arranged and hosted by SAPC, provided the opportunity for residents to meet with the HCA and the developer and raise their concerns. SAPC is disappointed that completion has taken so long and has shared the frustrations of the residents who have had to live in what has, for much of Ashland, been a building site for over eight years. Now that many of the roads are complete and the open and green spaces are being put in, the final vision for the built environment within Ashland will be realised. We also look forward to the completion of the Blue Light Hub centre over the next year or so. As well as working to encourage the completion of the estate, SAPC has been active in responding to various planning applications, supporting these where

residents and the council were in approval, but rejecting or suggesting amendments as appropriate. For example, SAPC has been very active in working with MKC to oppose the development of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and illegal development on the estate. In addition, we have directly lobbied the relevant lead members for housing at MKC to highlight to them the issues that residents within the parish are facing. Given our small size, it is encouraging to hear from MKC colleagues the impact that we are having at a MK wide level, which is way in excess of what a council this size would be expected to have.

Within Simpson, it is evident that the physical environment will change over the next twelve months as developments come on stream. Residents worked with SAPC in pulling together a robust campaign around the proposed development at 211 Simpson (the Early Intervention Centre site) that led to the rejection of the initial plans. SAPC has continued to work with MKC and its planning officers on other applications within Simpson to ensure that proposed developments are, as outlined in the SAPC Vision Document, fit for purpose and that a proportion are affordable. As I write, we are awaiting a revised planning submission but in the meeting that was held with the applicants in April 2018, it was evident that resident feedback on what would, or indeed would not be appropriate development for that site had been taken on board. And as with the first application, residents will be able to feed in their views on any resubmission both through SAPC and in their own right. Over the next year it is likely that the Walnuts Site will be converted to provide a MKC run day centre for those with severe dementia and we will update residents as specific plans become clearer. Opposite the Walnuts, and at the very centre of the village is the Five Acres Nursing Home site and we understand that the site has now been sold and that a new care home will open on the site. We look forward to welcoming staff and residents to the parish. We continue to lobby MKC to encourage the landowner of the land adjacent to Walden Croft to build houses and are disappointed that land-banking such as this is taking place when the need for local housing continues apace.

As a council, we have realised over the last twelve months that the SAPC approach to planning could be refined and so have developed a robust and transparent system that will ensure greater awareness amongst residents of local planning applications. To this end we now have a named Cllr for planning and hold a parish planning meeting that is open to all residents once every two months. With the demand on land in the parish growing, we will continue to review our approach to planning to ensure that it continues to be effective.

SAPC will also continue to develop the work that it does to support the communities within Simpson and Ashland. We receive a great deal of advice and feedback from residents, much of it suggesting what we should or indeed, should not do, or how we could do things better. We do, where possible, act on the advice we get but as the council, we sometimes have to make a judgement about what we can do and when, and how we do it. This does not always endear us to all residents but we have to see the bigger picture and work within the legal and financial parameters that we have as a publically accountable body, to address concerns. We are also aware that for many residents, SAPC is not as meaningful to them as it could be and they are not aware of the work that we do or the key role that we have. To this end, we

have continued to develop our online media presence (the SAPC Facebook page now has over 230 members) as well as continuing to publish the parish newsletter four times a year. But we want to do much more than this and so, in autumn 2017, SAPC commissioned Community Action: MK to carry out a series of activities in Simpson including focus groups, individual interviews and online and paper surveys, to capture the views on:

1. What residents in Simpson connect to in Milton Keynes
2. What activities and services residents of Simpson would like to be able to access and what type of place they would like Simpson to be; and
3. What people are concerned about in their current and future life.

The outcomes of this work have been pulled together in a report that will provide SAPC with the information to ground its work in the coming twelve month period and beyond. Once the Ashland development is complete we will carry out a similar exercise to capture the views of residents in this part of the parish, to ensure that all voices from across the community are heard.

Within the context of a continued reduction of budget at MKC level and cost pressures on other local services (for example the NHS), and from the feedback we receive, SAPC knows that there are real issues and challenges that some of our residents are facing which will not go away. We are keen to continue to work with residents to put in place systems, structures and approaches that may address, or at least mitigate, some of these challenges. We don't have the capacity or indeed the financial resources to do this on our own and so much of what we do as a council is to facilitate action or activity and work alongside, rather than simply provide for, residents. This facilitative model is different from how other parish councils are run but we hope through this, we can get greater community involvement and engagement and come up with approaches and solutions that are fit for purpose. But the council cannot do this on its own. Some of the issues and challenges that are raised by residents lay well outwith those that a council the size of SAPC would ever consider- but we do consider these and we punch well above our weight in terms of what we do and the breadth and depth of the work we get involved with. For example, we lobby hard on behalf of residents with local and national bodies to ensure what happens within the parish is fit for purpose and to the benefit of residents- for example, we have worked alongside the Guinness Trust to highlight issues raised by Guinness tenants relating to their housing management and we continue to push HCA and other agencies to get the best outcomes possible for the Ashland estate- no other body does this activity on behalf of local residents. The Cllrs have a wealth of expertise and experience that they bring to bear and we hope that, working alongside residents, we will continue to make a positive difference. Looking forward we know that we will be able to have a greater say in what happens within the parish in terms of, for example, the provision of open space maintenance. As MKC devolves some of the services that it currently provides, there is the opportunity for residents, working with SAPC, to shape the services that we want at the local level. These services need to be paid for and over the last three years, SAPC has continued to increase its precept so that we have the funds available to take over some services as and when the opportunities arise. The shift to managing services was initially planned to take place in 2017 but MKC has delayed this transfer. We continue to work with colleagues

from MKC and other parish councils and will keep residents informed on the timetable for this development. We have already started discussions with local service providers to ensure transparency and value for money as we move to directly commission our own services.

As I have mentioned, we are a publically accountable body and the impact of this is that we work within strict guidelines laid down by central government. To this end, I would like to thank Sue Key, our Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, who ensures that we comply with all our legal and financial requirements. Much of this activity happens behind the scenes but anybody who has been to a SAPC public meeting or gone onto our website will see our policies, statement of accounts and minutes. Sue has decided that now is the time to retire from SAPC and all Cllrs wish Sue a long and happy retirement. Over the summer we will be appointing a replacement for Sue and there will be opportunities to meet with our new clerk once in post.

As noted at the 2017 APM, the council now has sole responsibility of the Village Hall (VH). Over the last twelve months, users will have seen developments at the hall that we hope have made it a more inviting space for local activities and events. As the sole and responsible owner SAPC, is developing both the way in which the VH is being used but also the terms and conditions for hire, to ensure that we meet all legal and health and safety requirements. Over time, our vision is that the VH will develop its role as a community hub and be used in innovative and exciting ways.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who are Cllrs on SAPC who have given so generously and freely of their time over the last twelve months. Being a member of SAPC can be challenging but Cllrs continue to work with and on behalf of residents, often quietly and under the radar for neither reward or praise and as Chair I would formally like to thank them for this and all the expertise and commitment that they bring. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Andrew Harrington for his efforts whilst a member.

Finally, I would like to thank all the residents of Simpson & Ashland for everything that you do to make this small part of Milton Keynes such a great place to live. The activities that you have got involved in be it litter picking, contributing to and distributing newsletters, enhancing the open spaces and the like, and much more- all these are greatly appreciated.

Attendees were invited to discuss what comes to mind when they think of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council, attendees answered with:

- Excellency
- Hard working
- Approachable
- Positive
- Local Community
- Effective
- Bias toward Simpson

	The Chair then invited everyone to partake of tea and cakes and the new parish clerk was invited to cut the cake.	
2 -3	<p>Simpson Survey</p> <p>The findings of this survey were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and Speed issues • Maintenance of roads and footpaths issues • Road and parking • Issue of Litter • Need of a Shop in Simpson • Residents of Simpson and Ashland are more positive about this part of Milton Keynes than people in Milton Keynes but the Parish needs residents you to be more engaged. <p>Councillor Pye thanked all those who participated in the speed watch through the village.</p> <p>The Parish Council accept the final report.</p> <p>Any actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those involved in the Village Hall committee were also thanked for all of their ongoing involvement in running the hall. Residents were encouraged to offer their time to participate and assist on the maintenance of the village hall as a community space going forward. • Councillor Pye informed residents about the Ashland development and the S106 monies and would like to hear from more residents regarding how the Parish spend this. • The Plough has a new landlord and may be a place of community focus so we need to consider how we as a Parish engage with them. 	All to note

Part two – Annual meeting of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council

Present	Cllrs David Pye (Chair), Peter Barnes, Carole Baume, Robert Ling, Catherine Pope, Sheila Thornton Faith Gyimah (Clerk/RFO)	
Min. Ref.	Item	Action
4	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies: No apologies received.	Noted
5	Election of Chair for 2018/19: Cllr Pye confirmed he was prepared to stand again as Chair. Cllr Thornton nominated Cllr Pye and Cllr Pope seconded. There were no other nominations made. The Parish Council unanimously supported this nomination and Cllr Pye is the new Chair for the forthcoming year. Declaration of office signed at the meeting.	Noted
6	Election of Vice Chair for 2018/19: Cllr Barnes confirmed he was willing to stand again as Vice Chair. Cllr Pye nominated Cllr Barnes and Cllr Pope seconded. No other nominations received. Parish Council unanimously supported this nomination and Cllr Barnes is the new Vice Chair for the forthcoming year. Declaration of office signed at the meeting.	Noted

6.1.	<p>Appointment of Councillors Noted: Declaration of acceptance of office for councillors signed at the meeting. Below is a list of the cllr groups and committees: Simpson Village Hall Management - Cllrs Pope, Barnes and Ling Devolved Services- Cllr Baume Simpson and Ashland Planning and Development- Cllr Baume Open Spaces- Cllr Pye Towpaths, Roads and Pathways- Cllr Ling Community Engagement- Cllr Thornton Communications- Cllr Barnes Finance Portfolio- Cllr Pope</p>	Noted
7	<p>Declarations of Interest No change to current declarations in place.</p>	Noted
8	<p>Public Forum: No public forum, the Annual Council meeting (Part one) provided the opportunity for public discussion.</p>	
9	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual meeting: Noted – Minutes and budget expenditure of 5 March 2018 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	Noted
10	<p>Matters arising from 5 March 2018 minutes: 211 Simpson-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parish Council have no objection to the development as outlined and noted the concerns of the management of clear awareness signs due to no dedicated pathways for use of cyclist and pedestrians. The Parish Council would be investigating the possibility of discussing the access arrangements with relevant MKC highways officers and will ask about arrangements in terms of contractor staff parking and also large delivery access to the site during building phase. <p>All other items covered in rest of agenda.</p>	Noted
11	<p>Delegated Decisions made since last meeting: To note the following decisions have been made under the scheme of delegated powers since the last meeting: 29 March – Payment of CVS invoice £60 year end pension admin fee 30 March – Payment and Business World Printers service invoice £81.60 for Charles Warren Craft fair in October 29 March – Approved final payment of: CA:MK Simpson Payment scheduled for 2018/18 be paid in 2018/19 financial year GDPR commence process Approval to pay internal auditors invoice for £180 instead of £150 No objection to Plough Planning licensing application. a) The above was noted</p>	Noted
12	<p>Register of Interest Annual review carried out. Noted, all cllrs have signed and no changes have been made.</p>	
13	<p>Groups</p>	

	There were no updates reported.	
14	<p>Financial Report: Year End 2017/18 and Internal Audit Report:</p> <p>14.1) Cllr Pye thanked Cllr Pope and Clerk Sue Key for preparing the report. The Year End resulted in a balance of £63137.95 which was submitted on the Annual Return and was audited.</p> <p>14.2) The 2017/18 Internal report was approved and it was agreed to action the recommendation from the Internal Auditor to include Financial Risk Assessment as an item on future agendas. It was noted that at council meetings the accounts are checked thoroughly and the Parish Council consider the implications of decisions made for the annual budget. Significant variances will be considered and explained.</p> <p>14.3) Part 1 of the 2017/18 Annual Audit Return was discussed and signed off.</p> <p>Parish Council reviewed the Annual Internal reports and it was noted that all control objectives continue to be in place. Each item discussed and noted as a yes to all items except from trust funds which is not notable.</p> <p>Parish Council reviewed Annual Governance Statement (section 1) and noted to continue to maintain all procedures as required. See also Internal Auditors report. Agreed and signed off.</p>	Noted
15	<p>Finance and Annual Audit Return:</p> <p>15.1) PC reviewed and agreed Section 2 and Cllr Pye signed all sections 1 and 2.</p> <p>15.2) The Parish Council summarised the month's income and expenditure, there were variances of 10% and the balance of £84,164 was noted and no action will be taken.</p> <p>15.3) The Financial Risk assessment was signed by Cllr Pye and agreed by the Parish Council.</p> <p>15.4) It was noted that those who have not completed and returned their form will have their details removed from our database. Those who wish to remain in contact with us must email the Clerk Faith.</p>	Noted
16	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>i) Cllr Ling is looking to involve a resident in the management of the Village Hall to better understand how to generate our objectives through the ownership and use of the Village Hall.</p> <p>ii) Suggestion of planned topical Parish Council meetings to improve community engagement and feedback of how to reach out to a wider range of residents to be involved in discussions regarding the parish.</p> <p>iii) Agreement from Milton Keynes Council that the S106 letter states that the S106 monies will be committed rather than spent.</p> <p>iv) To discuss plans on 2 July on ways of informing residents which streets have been cleaned. Suggested to have an event to involve residents in community engagement litter pick days.</p> <p>v) Ashland tree.</p> <p>vi) Clerk to look at Age UK or Citizens Advice services at the Village Hall to build the community engagement.</p> <p>vii) Cllr Ling to search for Pop up desk for Clerk under £200</p>	

	viii) The Council to consider directly contacting residents regarding a few concerns including housing association property, rough sleepers and litter. There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.10 p.m. Date and time of next meeting: 3rd September 2018 at 8.00 p.m.	
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Appendix 1

Chair's Annual Report
See item 1 of above minutes.

Appendix 2

C.N.DAVIES

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

Simpson and Ashland Parish Council

Governance and Internal Controls

Annual Internal Audit Report

2017/18

Debrief meeting	16 th May 2018	Auditors	C.N. Davies
Draft Report issued			
Responses received			
Final report issued		Client sponsor	Clerk to the Council
		Distribution	Parish Councillors

The matters raised in this report are only those that came to our attention during our internal audit work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist, or of all the improvements that may be required. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information provided in this report is as accurate as possible, based on the information provided and documentation reviewed, no complete guarantee or warranty can be given with regard to the advice and information contained herein. Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

This report is prepared solely for the use of Parish Councillors of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council. Details may be made available to specified external agencies, including external auditors, but otherwise the report should not be quoted or referred to in whole or in part without prior consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared and is not intended for any other purpose.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An audit of Governance and Internal Controls was undertaken as part of the approved internal audit periodic plan for 2017/18. This is in compliance with the expected controls and procedures as outlined by the National Audit Office in the Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities in England Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 3) for the year ended 31st March 2018.

The Parish Council consists of eight councillor members (with two vacancies) including the Chairperson, and also includes the Clerk to the Parish Council \ Responsible Financial Officer.

The system of accounting used by the Parish Council is a Receipts and Payments Account.

Annual Accounts drawn up in the traditional format have been produced, presented to the Parish Council and approved by them at a regular meeting. These accounts are drawn up from the Receipts and Payments

schedule, supporting bank accounts and appropriate documentation to evidence transactions. It should be noted that all transactions are enacted electronically with no manual cheques being drawn or used during the financial year.

The Simpson Village Hall forms part of the parish assets and is controlled and managed by the Parish Council. This is the first year of parish council operation and a Village Hall management committee has been formed. Terms of Reference for the management committee and various policies and procedures for the governance of the village hall operation have been drawn up and approved at the Parish Council meetings. The Task and Finish Group set up to organise the transfer of the full running of the village hall has now been disbanded and a separate Simpson Village Hall bank account has been set up.

The funds accrued by the Simpson Association in relation to the previous running of the village hall have been transferred to the Parish Council bank account. It was decided in the January 2018 council meeting that these funds would be ring fenced for the sole use of the Village Hall.

Audit Objective

To ensure that effective governance and accounting processes have been established and are operating.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The objective of our audit was to evaluate the adequacy of control within the system and the extent to which these have been applied, with a view to providing an opinion. Control activities are put in place to ensure that risks to the achievement of the organisation's objectives are managed effectively.

The approach taken for this audit was a systematic audit and included the following:

- Establishing the controls for which external audit intends to place reliance on internal audit testing.
- Reviewing the adequacy and application of the controls in place to mitigate the risk.

When planning the audit, the following controls for review and limitations were agreed:

Control activities relied upon.

- Compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Member Declaration of Acceptance and Register of Members maintained for all Councillors.
- Year End accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.
- Council minutes produced for each meeting.
- Procedures in place to achieve Value for Money.
- Accounting records maintained and suitably authorised.
- An annual budget in support of the Precept prepared and variances fully discussed.
- Salary payments and PAYE / NIC correctly operated.
- VAT accounted for correctly.
- An asset file maintained with the Register of Assets up to date.

Limitations to the scope of the audit:

To evaluate the adequacy of control in the areas under review and the extent to which controls have been applied, with a view to providing an opinion to the extent with which risks in this area are managed.

- The scope of the work was limited to those areas examined and reported upon in the areas for consideration in the context of the objectives set out for this review. It should not, therefore, be considered as a comprehensive review of all aspects of non-compliance that may exist now or in the future.
- We undertook an assessment of the adequacy of aspects of the control framework with limited testing to confirm its operation in practice.
- Any testing undertaken as part of this audit was compliance based and sample testing only.
- Our work did not provide any guarantee against material errors, loss or fraud or provide an absolute assurance that material error; loss or fraud does not exist.

The audit was designed to assess the controls in place to manage the objective.

These are:

- Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

- The Parish Council complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
- The Parish Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.
- The precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.
- Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
- Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.
- Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approval and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.
- Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained
- Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.
- Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments) agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

The conduct of this audit complied with the standards set out in GIAS.

1.3 CONCLUSION

Taking account of the issues identified, in our opinion the Parish Council can take Substantial Assurance that the controls upon which the Parish Council relies to manage this area, as currently laid down and operated, are consistently applied and effective.

The above conclusions feeding into the overall assurance level are based on the evidence obtained during the review.

Application of and compliance with control framework

All controls as noted above have been reviewed and compliance is considered to be satisfactory.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The following tables highlight the number and categories of recommendations made. The Action Plan at Section 2 details the specific recommendations made as well as agreed management actions to implement them.

Recommendations made during this audit:

	High	Medium	Low
	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

No formal recommendations have been made.

However, a suggestion has been made which is included within the action plan and the main body of the report.

2 ACTION PLAN

The priority of the recommendations made is as follows:

Priority	Description
High	Recommendations are prioritised to reflect our assessment of risk associated with the control weaknesses.
Medium	
Low	

Suggestion

These are not formal recommendations that impact our overall opinion but used to highlight a suggestion or idea that management may want to consider.

Appendix 3**Paper 6****Finance Report: Part A: Balance statements for all 3 Accounts:**

PARISH COUNCIL AND VILLAGE HALL	Actual 2017-18 £	Budget 2017-18 Budget £	Actual 2018-19 To date £	Committed 2018 £
Balance on Annual Return	£20,597.09		£15,783.22	£36,950.88
Income	£57,943.85	£60,100.00	£26,829.82	£33,250.00
Transfer In	£9,157.82			
Transfer Out	£44,568.23			
TOTAL BALANCE OF INCOME	£43,108.33		£42,613.04	£70,200.88
Operational Expenditure	£27,037.19	£55,235.50	£5,662.16	£11,509.90
Grant Expenditure	£287.92	£3,300.00		£0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£15,783.22	£58,553.50	£36,950.88	£58,690.98

PARISH RESERVE ACCOUNT	Actual 2017-2018 £	Actual 2018-19 To date £	Committed 2018 £
Balance on Annual Return	£11,309.67	£46,354.73	£46,356.76
Income	£10.85	£2.03	
Transfer In	£35,410.41		
Transfer Out			
TOTAL BALANCE OF INCOME/TRANSFERS	£46,730.93	£46,356.76	£46,356.76
Expenditure	376.20		
Bank Balance at end of each period	£46,354.73	£46,356.76	£46,356.76

VILLAGE HALL ACCOUNT	Actual 2018-19 To date £	Committed 2018 £
Balance on Annual Return	£1,000.00	£1,007.00
Income	£50.00	
Transfer In		
Transfer Out		£1,007.00
TOTAL BALANCE OF INCOME/TRANSFERS	£1,050.00	£0.00
Expenditure	£43.00	
Bank Balance at end of each period	£1,007.00	£0.00

Note: Village Hall account to be shut down and money transferred into Account 1.

TOTAL BANK BALANCE		Bank Balance at 24 May2018	Projected at Year end 2018-19
		£84,314.64	£1065,054.74