

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Whitwick Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Cathy Walsh	Date of report:	17 June 2024
Year ending:	31 March 2024	Date audit carried out:	17 June 2024

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in JPAG Practitioners Guide. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils and it sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

I completed the year-end audit of the council remotely on 17 June 2024. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Sharon Kaye (Parish Manager) for her co-operation and assistance in delivering the council's internal audit.

In preparation for the audit, I examined the publicly available information displayed on the council's website, including the council's policies, procedures, agendas, minutes, financial and other records. I sought evidence to confirm that the previous year's Internal and External Audit reports had been properly reported to the council and where necessary acted upon by the council.

During my audit I also examined the council's arrangements for the management and control of its business in the areas of bookkeeping, due processes (i.e. compliance with the proper practices as set out in the JPAG Practitioners Guide), risk management, budget setting and monitoring, payroll, asset register, bank reconciliations, internal control, year-end procedures and compliance with the publication requirements of the 2022/23 AGAR.

Over the last year Whitwick Parish Council has seen significant changes in its staffing structure. The council is in the process of appointing two key posts to support the new Parish Manager and complete the staff team.

Because I have answered 'no' to one of the questions in the AIAR, this report provides the reason for that marking and as such, a copy of the report must be included with the AGAR when it is submitted to the External Auditor.

Have comments from the internal audit 2022-2023 been addressed?

Recommendation 2022-2023	Comment
The published Standing Orders make reference to remote meetings. Temporary regulations which allowed local councils to hold remote meetings in response to the pandemic was revoked on 07 May 2021.	The council's Standing Orders are dated May 2022 and still reference remote meeting legislation.
The council has a management agreement in place for the Walkers Flats Allotment site. The agreement began on 01 October 2017 and runs for five years. It expired on 30 September 2022.	This has not been updated.
Minutes of several meetings of the council, going back 6 months or more, were not prepared, so no legal record of those who attended or the business conducted exist.	The minutes have now been produced and published.

Areas in the 2023-2024 AGAR Annual Internal Audit Report for which Yes or N/A cannot be ticked

Internal Control Objective
<p>C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</p> <p>The council did not carry out an Annual Risk assessment during 2023/24.</p> <p>I am unable to ensure that the authority has prepared, and formally adopted, at least once annually, an appropriate and comprehensive register of assessed risks. As the council has not met the expectation of the AGAR requirements I have answered 'No' to control objective C.</p>

Recommendations for action 2023-2024

Areas for consideration or improvement	Recommendation
The published Standing Orders make reference to remote meetings. Temporary regulations which allowed local councils to hold remote meetings in response to the pandemic was revoked on 07 May 2021.	Update and review the Standing Orders. Remove obsolete legislation relating to remote meetings.
The council has not reviewed its Financial Regulations since May 2022.	The clerk advised that although this was not completed in 2023/24 the council intends to adopt the new NALC model regulations issued in May 2024.
The council's Risk Assessment & Management Schedule was not reviewed during 2023/24. Date of last review May 2022.	Schedule a review of the Risk Assessment & Management Schedule.
Local Government Transparency Code 2015 publication requirements.	Parish and town councils with annual turnover in excess of £200,000 should as best practice comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

As part of the transaction spot check, I examined a payment which was made up of 3 invoices grouped together. The total agreed with the cashbook and bank statement, but there was a small anomaly whereby the VAT and net amount differed slightly. I assume this was down to an inputting error.	Ensure figures inputted in the cashbook are entered correctly.
The council has a management agreement in place for the Walkers Flats Allotment site. The agreement began on 01 October 2017 and runs for five years. It expired on 30 September 2022.	The clerk advised that a new management agreement is in-hand.

Yours sincerely,



Cathy Walsh
Internal Auditor to the Council
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The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2023	Year ending 31 March 2024
1. Balances brought forward	318,139	307,452
2. Annual precept	274,660	282,900
3. Total other receipts	20,022	48,468
4. Staff costs	96,429	85,115
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	208,940	225,665
7. Balances carried forward	307,452	328,040
8. Total cash and investments	278,126	313,742
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	147,599	147,599
10. Total borrowings	0	0