

Internal Audit

Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending 31 March
2020

Internal Auditor: Robert Whitehouse

Summary Checklist Report

This internal audit report is based upon the Association of Local Councils recommended checklist, introduced in 2016, in conjunction with the Practitioners' Guide to Governance and Accountability in Local Authorities.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

Name of Council	Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council	Name of Clerk to the Council	Lisa Wilkinson
No. Of Councillors	7	Name of RFO	Lisa Wilkinson
Quorum	3	Precept (for audit year)	£34,247
Electorate	1,200 (approx.)	Gross budgeted income	£34,247

1. Book-Keeping			Comments & Recommendations
1.1	Ledger maintained & up to date?	Yes	The accounts are kept on Scribe, software designed for Parish councils. They were balanced and up to date for the monthly Council meeting.
1.2	Arithmetic correct?	Yes	Checks of the computerised accounting system (Scribe) confirmed that the cashbook and other accounts arithmetic were correct.
1.3	Evidence of internal control?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit • Risk assessment policy • Risk management schedule • Budgetary control and monitoring • Bank reconciliation review by Council
1.4	VAT evidence, recording and reclaimed?	Yes	The Council is able to recover VAT through the Local Authorities and Similar Bodies Scheme. A claim for repayment of VAT is made usually made quarterly, unless the refund is < £100. The last claim received in the year covered the period to 31/12/2019. Testing indicated that VAT on income and expenditure had been correctly applied.
1.5	Payments in the ledger supported by invoices, authorised & minuted?	Yes	See Detailed schedule in Compliance Testing Report. All payments are authorised in monthly minutes.
1.6	Is GPC expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	Yes	All GPC (formerly S137) expenditure is identified within the PC accounting software, Scribe. GPC expenditure is identified in PC minutes.
1.7	Is GPC expenditure of direct benefit to the electorate?	Yes	All GPC expenditure incurred in the current financial year was in respect of activities relevant to the parish. Eg £2,600 subsidy to the New Beaconsfield Hall.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

2. Due Process			Comments & Recommendations
2.1	Standing Orders adopted since 2010?	Yes	The Clerk gave an assurance that Council review the Standing Orders annually. Last review was May 2019 as minuted.
2.2	Standing Orders reviewed at Annual Meeting?	Yes	Standing Orders, together with other key Council governance documents, were reviewed and approved at the Annual meeting in May 2019.
2.3	Financial Regulations adopted?	Yes	The Clerk gave an assurance that Council reviewed the Financial Regulations annually. Last review May 2019 as minuted.
2.4	Financial Regulations properly tailored to Council?	Yes	The current Financial Regulations are based on the current NALC model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, adapted to suit the specific needs of the Council.
2.5	Equal Opportunities policy adopted?	Yes	An Equal Opportunities policy (Equal Access Policy) has been adopted by the Council and reviewed in May 2019.
2.6	RFO appointed?	Yes	Lisa Wilkinson was appointed as Clerk to the Council on 01/02/2015, which included responsibility as the RFO.
2.7	List of member's interests held?	Yes	The Clerk maintains and updates the list of member's interests as required. The information is available on the parish council.
2.8	Agendas signed, informative and displayed with 3 clear days' notice?	Yes	The clerk prepares and signs the council meeting agenda, which lists matters for discussion and is posted on the Council's website and on notice boards around the village on a Friday for the following Thursday Council meeting.
2.9	Purchase orders raised for all expenditure?	Yes	Most orders for goods and services are made by or confirmed by email.
2.10	Purchasing authority defined in Financial Regulations?	Yes	The Financial Regulations stipulate that purchases under £250 require an estimate; from £250 to £1,000 require 3 estimates; £1,000 to £10,000 3 quotes. Over £10,000, tenders required.
2.11	Legal powers identified in minutes and/or ledger?	Yes	Legal powers are recorded on invoices
2.12	Committee terms of reference exist and have been reviewed?	No	The council has a working party for s106

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

3. Risk Management			Comments & Recommendations
3.1	Does a scan of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	No	Minutes are prepared for all meetings of the Council, which meets monthly. No unusual financial activity was found in the minutes reviewed, with the exception of high spend items £8,600 Proposed 30mph consultation, signage & VAS from April 2019 and £18,450 Playground maintenance & new equipment from June 2019. Council minutes are available to view on the Council's website.
3.2	Is an annual risk assessment carried out?	Yes	The Council has a formal risk assessment policy in place covering many of the areas of risk the Council may be faced with. The risk assessment policy is maintained by the Clerk and reviewed annually, as part of the review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
3.3	Is Insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Yes	The level and range of insurance cover (£10m public, £5m employer) appears to be adequate for the size of the Council.
3.4	Evidence of annual insurance review?	Yes	The insurance is renewed annually on 1st June. Insurance cover is currently placed with brokers Aviva. The Clerk undertakes a review of insurances prior to renewal to ensure that best value is obtained in respect of service levels and premiums.
3.5	Internal financial controls documented and evidenced?	Yes	Stipulated in the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Management
3.6	Minutes initialled, each page identified and overall signed?	Yes	Minutes of all Council meetings are initialled by the chair of the meeting. Each page of the minutes is identified by a unique page number reference and all minutes are signed by the meeting chair and dated.
3.7	Regular reporting and minuting of bank balances?	No	Bank balances are presented to Council at each meeting. It has been implemented as of May 2019.
3.8	GPB expenditure minuted?	Yes	All expenditure is minuted and identified as GPC expenditure in the minutes.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

4. Budget			Comments & Recommendations
4.1	Annual budget prepared to support precept?	Yes	A detailed budget is prepared annually by the Clerk.
4.2	Has budget been discussed and adopted by Council?	Yes	The budget for the financial year being audited was reviewed and approved by the Council at its October 2019 meeting.
4.3	Any reserves earmarked?	Yes	Allocated reserves are listed and were resolved at the April 2020 PC meeting. Recorded in PC minutes page 206. Reserves appear to be significant and it is recommended that they are reviewed and kept at a suitable level. From the NALC good councillor guide "A council should typically hold between 3 and 12 months expenditure as a general reserve"
4.4	Any unexplained variances from budget?	Yes	All explained as per the Annual Return and year-end financial reports.

4. Budget			Comments & Recommendations
4.5	Precept demand correctly minuted?	Yes	The approved precept demand of £34,247 was forwarded to WODC by the deadline and was correctly minuted.

5. Payroll - Clerk			Comments & Recommendations
5.1	Contract of employment?	Yes	The Clerk has a contract with the Council to undertake the duties of Clerk to the Council on an employed basis. The contract is for 10 hours per week. The contract with the Clerk is in accordance with NJC. Payment is made through PAYE.
5.2	Tax code issued/contracted out?	Yes	The Clerk submits monthly payroll returns to HMRC for her salary and the correct tax code is used.
5.3	PAYE/NI evidence?	Yes	Records provided via HMRC's Basic Tools free software.
5.4	Has Council approved the salary paid?	Yes	The Clerk is paid, monthly in arrears, on submission of a timesheet. Any changes to the clerk's remuneration and contract are approved by the Council. Council approves salaries for payment as part of the expenditure approval process. The Clerk's salary is approved within the setting of the annual budget.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

5. Payroll - Clerk			Comments & Recommendations
5.5	Other payments reasonable and approved by Council?	Yes	The contract with the Clerk includes a monthly office allowance, which is £15 pcm. This is to cover incidental expenses of working from home. Other specific business and out of pocket expenses incurred by the Clerk are claimed at the same time as the claim for remuneration by the Clerk. The Council is registered for Auto Enrolment Pensions and the Clerk is enrolled.

6. Payroll - Other			Comments & Recommendations
6.1	Contracts of employment?	No	N/A as the Clerk is responsible for all the financial and administrative affairs of the Council and there are no other employees.
6.2	Does the Council have employers' liability cover?	Yes	The Council has employer's liability cover of £5m.
6.3	Tax code(s) issued?	Yes	N/a
6.4	Minimum Wage paid?	Yes	The Clerk's remuneration exceeds both the applicable Minimum Wage and Living Wage.
6.5	Disciplinary, Grievance & Complaints procedures in place?	Yes	A complaints and Grievance Policy has been adopted and disciplinary procedures are in the Clerks contract of employment.

7. Asset Control			Comments & Recommendations
7.1	Does the Council keep a register of all material assets owned?	Yes	The Clerk is responsible for maintaining the manual asset register.
7.2	Is the asset register up to date?	Yes	The asset register was up to date as at the financial year-end.
7.3	Value of individual assets included?	Yes	All assets have an individual value on the asset register
7.4	Inspected for risk and health and safety?	Yes	A Councillor inspects the village assets e.g. play areas on a regular basis and reports back to the Council. Play equipment checked annually by ROSPA accredited inspectors.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

8. Bank Reconciliation			Comments & Recommendations
8.1	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account?	Yes	The Council holds the following bank accounts, all of which were operating at the start of the financial year; Unity Trust Current A/c 20367147 Unity Trust Deposit A/c 20367150
8.2	Reconciliation carried out on receipt of statement?	Yes	The bank accounts are reconciled on receipt of bank statements.
8.3	Any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	No	n/a
8.4	Is the bank mandate up to date?	Yes	All payments are entered by the Clerk onto online banking and are authorised by two councillors who have their own login credentials. Cheques also require 2 signatories.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

9. Year-End Procedures			Comments & Recommendations
9.1	Year-end accounts prepared on correct accounting basis?	Yes	Day to day and year-end accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.
9.2	Bank statements and ledger reconcile?	Yes	A full reconciliation of each bank statement to the corresponding account in the ledger as at 31st March was prepared and reviewed and approved by the Council.
9.3	Underlying financial trail from records to presented accounts?	Yes	The computerised accounting system provides a satisfactory audit trail to the underlying financial records.
9.4	Where applicable, debtors and creditors properly recorded?	Yes	Although not required to be recorded in the Receipts and Payments Accounts (i.e. cash based accounts), no outstanding debtors or creditors were identified at the financial year-end.
9.5	Has Council agreed, signed and minuted sections 1 & 2 of the AGAR (Annual Return)?	No	Section 1-Annual Governance Statement and Section 2-Accounting Statement, were signed and minuted by Council on 20 June 2019.

10. Miscellaneous			Comments & Recommendations
10.1	Have points raised at the last internal audit been addressed?	Yes	

10. Miscellaneous			Comments & Recommendations
10.2	Has the Council adopted a Code of Conduct since July 2012?	Yes	The Council adopted a Code of Conduct following the 2011 Localism Act in 2012, which was reviewed 16 May 2019.
10.3	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	Yes	Reviewed 16 May 2019.
10.4	Are all electronic files backed up?	Yes	Data on the Clerk's PC is backed up on a monthly basis. The Council is also looking at a cloud backup to reduce the chances of data loss.
10.5	Do arrangements for the public inspection of records exist?	Yes	The Transparency Act requires a significant amount of Council data to be available on the Council's website. Notice of audit is displayed as per external audit instructions. Outside of this period, inspection of records can be undertaken by prior appointment.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

11. Charities			Comments & Recommendations
11.1	Charities reported and accounted separately?	Yes	The Council is a trustee and is involved in the administration of the James Alfred Willis Trust (Registered charity 208828). The balance in the bank account was minuted in February 2020
11.2	Have the Charity accounts been separately audited?	No	Not required.
11.3	Have the Charity accounts and Annual Return been filed within the legal time limits?	Yes	

12. Burial Authorities			Comments & Recommendations
12.1	All money received corresponds with the number of burials/cremations recorded and memorial permits issued?	Yes	
12.2	Are fees levied in accordance with the Council's approved scale of fees and charges?	Yes	
12.3	Have all statutory books been kept safe and up to date? If electronic copies are held, are these backed up regularly?	n/a	Agreement that PCC do this on behalf of the PC
12.4	Do all internment of ashes have a certificate of cremation?	No	There are no cremations in the Burial Ground
12.5	Have the necessary permits, permissions, and transfer of Exclusive Burial Right (EBR) been completed correctly, documented and approved?	n/a	Agreement that PCC do this on behalf of the PC

13. Income Controls			Comments & Recommendations
13.1	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Yes	
13.2	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	Yes	The precept was received in the following instalments and recorded in the accounts: April 2019: £17,123.50 (50% of annual precept). September 2019: £17,123.50 (50% of annual Precept) The total precept received for 2019/20 was £34,247 as per the WODC notification
13.3	Are security controls over cash adequate and effective?	Yes	Only cash is from allotment receipts which are recorded and banked.

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

14. Petty Cash			Comments & Recommendations
14.1	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT receipts where applicable?	N/a	No petty cash is used
14.2	Is petty cash expenditure reported to Council?	N/a	
14.3	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	N/a	

Internal Audit Summary Checklist Report for Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending: 31 March 2020

TRANSACTION SPOT CHECK						
Check No.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Transaction type	Purchase invoice	Purchase invoice	Purchase invoice	Income	Pay	Precept
Supplier/Customer	OCC	KJ Millard Ltd	Green Scythe Ltd		Parish Clerk	WODC
Invoice/Transaction No.	39202310497	105018	11274		Sept 2019	1909091
Invoice/Transaction date	08/04/2019	12/07/2019	31/10/2019	31/12/2019	31/08/2019	10/09/2019
Goods/services supplied	Proposed 30mph consultation and signs	Skip Hire	Grass cutting	Burial Fees	Salary & Expenses	Precept
Ledger date	18/04/2019	15/08/2019	19/12/2019	31/12/2019	19/09/2019	10/09/2019
Item/Budget heading	Capital Projects	General Maintenance Allotments	Grass Cutting (various)	Burial Fees	Clerk's Salary £537.33 Clerks Expenses £15	Precept
Ref/cheque No.	Online Banking	Online Banking	Online Banking	Deposit	Online Banking	Funds received
Authorised by	2*authorised signatories	2*authorised signatories	2*authorised signatories	Clerk	2*authorised signatories	Clerk
Delivery evidence	Councillor checked	Councillor checked	Councillor collected	Direct Payment	Clerk's services	Funds received
Payment minute ref	Page 153	Page 171	Page 189	Page 195	Page 177	Page 177
Payment value	£8,600.00	£216.00	£837.56	£945.00	£552.33	£17,321.00
Bank Statement value	£8,600.00	£216.00	£837.56	£945.00	£552.33	£17,321.00
Payment Date	23/04/2019	16/08/2019	19/12/2019	27/12/2019	20/09/2019	11/09/2019
Timely payment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VAT recorded	£1,000	£36.00 VAT not recorded	£139.59	n/a	n/a	n/a
GPC recorded in ledger	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
GPC minuted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Notes		VAT to be claimed on future claim		Income recorded as included in bank balance		Payment includes £197.50 Grant
Pass	√	√	√	√	√	√

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Year Ending: 31 March 2020

Any further comments
The overall internal audit assurance rating is: VERY GOOD.

Acknowledgments
The help and co-operation of Lisa Wilkinson, Clerk to the Council is much appreciated by the internal auditor.

Internal audit carried out by	(signed) <i>RY Whitehouse</i>	(print) Robert Whitehouse
	Audit type (delete as appropriate)	INTERIM ANNUAL
Date	11/06/2020	

For internal auditor's use only	
Part 3 of Annual Return form completed and signed	11/06/2020
Internal audit report/letter sent to Council	11/06/2020

Section 2: Compliance Testing Report for Hailey Parish Council Year

Ending: March 2020

2019/20 ANNUAL RETURN		Year Ending 31 March 2019	Year Ending 31 March 2020
1	Balances brought forward	£ 93,186	£ 104,195
2	Annual precept	£ 34,497	£ 34,247
3	Total other receipts	£ 11,796	£ 14,835
4	Staff costs	£ 7,549	£ 7,771
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	£ 0	£ 0
6	Total other payments	£ 27,735	£ 58,087
7	Balances carried forward	£ 104,195	£ 87,419
8	Total cash and investments	£ 104,195	£ 87,419
9	Total fixed assets and long term assets	£ 157,527	£ 167,404
10	Total borrowings	£ 0	£ 0
11	The Council acts as a sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets	NO	NO