

Internal Audit

Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council

Year Ending 31 March
2021

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.

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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)	£35,240
Electorate	1,200 (approx.)	Gross budgeted income	£35,240

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 31/12/2020. 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 as "Donations" 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 £2,000 donated to the Burford HGV appeal.

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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. A review was minuted at the March 2020 Meeting of the council. Also reviewed in March 2021 to enable face to face meetings to be shorter.
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 March 2020. Also reviewed in March 2021 to enable face to face meetings to be shorter.
2.3	Financial Regulations adopted?	Yes	The Clerk gave an assurance that Council reviewed the Financial Regulations annually. A review was minuted at the March 2020 Meeting of the council. Also reviewed in March 2021 to enable face to face meetings to be shorter.
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. A review was minuted at the June 2020 and Feb 2021 Meetings of the council.
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 website.
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 £300 require an estimate; from £300 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

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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. Larger transactions were £9,846 on playground improvements and £3,846 for a container for allotments from August 2020 minutes. 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 BHIB. 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 and recorded in the minutes.
3.8	GPC expenditure minuted?	Yes	All expenditure is minuted and identified as GPC expenditure in the minutes.

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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 November 2019 meeting.
4.3	Any reserves earmarked?	Yes	Allocated reserves are listed as £8,996. Unallocated reserves were recorded as £75,489. It is recommended that unallocated reserves are reduced to 2 x the annual precept, ie £70,480 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	Are variances from budget explained?	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 £35,240 was forwarded to WODC by the deadline and was correctly minuted.on page 190 of the December 2019 minutes.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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, will be signed and minuted by Council on 20 May 2021.

10. Miscellaneous			Comments & Recommendations
10.1	Have points raised at the last internal audit been addressed?	No	Unallocated reserves were not reduced to the levels recommended by the NALC.
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 last reviewed 16 May 2019.
10.3	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	Yes	Reviewed 16 May 2019. Planned review in 2022.
10.4	Are all electronic files backed up?	Yes	Data on the Clerk's PC is backed up on a monthly basis using a hard drive and cloud.
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. All documents from last year's audit are on the website including Notice of Public Rights. This year's Notice of Public Rights is planned to be displayed from 2nd June 2021.

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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 206828). 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?	No	The annual return was filed 5 days late

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	The PC has Burial Ground Regulations that state the fees.
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 2020: £17,620 (50% of annual precept). September 2020: £17,620 (50% of annual Precept) The total precept received for 2020/21 was £35,240 as per the WODC notification
13.3	Are security controls over cash adequate and effective?	Yes	The only cash transactions are from allotment receipts which are recorded and banked.

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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	

15. Accessibility/Transparency			Comments & Recommendations
15.1	Are the following documents published on the website as per Transparency Code 2015: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All items of expenditure above £100 2. End of year accounts 3. Annual governance statement 4. Internal audit report 5. List of a councillor or member responsibilities 6. The details of public land and building assets 7. Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings 	Yes	
15.2	Is the website accessible as per The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018?	Yes	
15.3	Has an Accessibility Statement been published on the website?	Yes	

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TRANSACTION SPOT CHECK						
Check No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Transaction type	Purchase invoice	Purchase invoice	Purchase invoice	Income	Pay	Precept
Supplier/Customer	BHIB Council Insurance	RPM	Green Scythe Ltd	WODC	Parish Clerk	WODC
Invoice/Transaction No.	LCO00308-362455	3864	11582	2102221	May 2020	2009213
Invoice/Transaction date	05/04/2020	06/08/2020	31/10/2020	22/02/2021	18/06/2020	21/09/2020
Goods/services supplied	Local council insurance	Playground Improvements	Grass cutting	s106 Public art contribution	Salary & Expenses	Precept
Ledger date	21/05/2020	15/08/2019	17/12/2020	22/02/2021	18/06/2020	23/09/2020
Item/Budget heading	Insurance	Capital Projects	Grass Cutting (various)	General Grants	Clerk's Salary £529.26 Clerks Expenses £26	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 checked	Direct Payment	Clerk's services	Funds received
Payment minute ref	Page 211	Page 233	Page 237	Page 250	Page 216	Page 231
Invoice Amount	£391.48	£9,846.00	£1,138.32	£5,876.33	£555.26	£17,810.00
Bank Statement value	£391.48	£9,846.00	£1,138.32	£5,876.33	£573.68	£17,810.00
Payment Date	29/05/2020	21/08/2020	21/12/2020	24/02/2021	23/06/2020	23/09/2020
Timely payment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VAT recorded	n/a	£1,641.00	£189.72	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					Additional £18.42 was for an allotment sign	Payment includes £190.00 Grant
Pass	√	√	√	√	√	√

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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	17/05/2021	

For internal auditor's use only	
Part 3 of Annual Return form completed and signed	17/05/2021
Internal audit report/letter sent to Council	17/05/2021

Section 2: Accounting Statements for Shipton-u-Wychwood Parish Council Year Ending: March 2021

2020/21 ANNUAL RETURN		Year Ending 31 March 2020	Year Ending 31 March 2021
1	Balances brought forward	£ 104,195	£ 87,419
2	Annual precept	£ 34,247	£ 35,240
3	Total other receipts	£ 14,835	£ 16,474
4	Staff costs	£ 7,771	£ 7,453
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	£ 0	£ 0
6	Total other payments	£ 58,087	£ 47,195
7	Balances carried forward	£ 87,419	£ 84,485
8	Total cash and investments	£ 87,419	£ 84,485
9	Total fixed assets and long term assets	£ 167,404	£ 174,963
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