

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Wickham Skeith Parish Council – 2022/2023

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £25,444.62 Expenditure: £4,436.04 EMR: £23,895.51 Gen Reserves: £4,065.53

AGAR 2022 / 2023 Completion:

Section One: No

Section Two: Yes unsigned

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022 / 23: Yes

Certificate of Exemption: Not applicable

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year-end accounts. The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced.

***Recommendation (1):** Genesis invoice on 27/03/2023 for £725.00 has been paid with cheque number 100669 as £675.00.*

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Tenders
Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: Yes

Reviewed: No evidence that these were reviewed during year of Audit.

Financial Regulations in place: Yes

Reviewed No evidence that these were reviewed during year of Audit.

VAT reclaimed during the year: Yes

Registered: No

General Power of Competence: No

There were no tenders during the year that exceeded the £25,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold.

***Recommendation (2):** The council to review and adopt Standing Orders and Financial Regulations during the year of Audit, and minute the action taken.*

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Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council
Compliance with Data Protection regulations

Risk Assessment document in place: Yes
Data Protection registration: No

Recommendation (3): *The council to register with the ICO for Data Protection.*

Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulations have changed and the new Regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. It is likely that this will affect the way in which the Council handles its data. It is advised that, due to the financial risk associated with the new Data Protection Regulations, this should form part of the Council's Risk Assessment.

Recommendation (4): *To include reference to GDPR in the Council's Risk Assessment.*

Privacy Policy published: Yes

Insurance was in place for the year of audit.

There was no evidence in the minutes that the Risk Assessment, including Internal Controls, has been reviewed during the year of audit.

Recommendation (5): *To ensure the annual review of the Risk Assessment and Internal Controls is carried out during the year of audit.*

The Council have good internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Fidelity Cover: £25,000

The level of Fidelity cover is below the recommended guidelines of year-end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Recommendation (6): *To review Fidelity Cover in line with the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.*

Transparency

Under the **Transparency code for smaller authorities**, smaller councils with income/expenditure under £25,000 should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

Smaller Council: *Yes*

Website: www.wickhamskeith.suffolk.cloud

- a) all items of expenditure above £100
Published – Yes – contained within the minutes
- b) annual governance statement (By 1 July)
2022 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes
- c) end-of-year accounts (By 1 July)
2022 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes
- d) internal audit report (By 1 July)
2022 Annual Return, Section Four Published – Yes
- e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
Published – Yes
- f) the details of public land and building assets (By 1 July)
Published – Yes
- g) minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings
Published – Yes

The Council have met the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller councils.

Under **The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 9(6 & 7)** a smaller council having certified itself as an Exempt Authority must publish on their website:

Certificate of Exemption

Certificate of Exemption Published - Yes

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** a council is required to display AGAR's for the five years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 on their website. The council has complied with this requirement.

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15(2b)** councils must publish on their website:

Notice of period for the exercise of public rights

Published – Yes

Period of Exercise of Public Rights

Start Date 2nd July 2022 End Date 19th August 2022

Budgetary controls Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and supporting documents

Precept: £3,723 (2022 / 2023) Date: 10th January 2022 (Ref: 7.4)

Precept: £4,035 (2023 / 2024) Date: 9th January 2023 (Ref: 7.4)

Satisfactory budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and income received and banked cross-referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Petty Cash Associated books and established system in place

A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork. No Petty Cash held.

Payroll controls PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment

PAYE System in place: Yes – PAYE Tools

Employer PAYE Reference: 120/FE56857

P60's issued: Yes

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. All supporting paperwork is in place and a P60 has been produced as part of the year-end process. The Council has not joined the LGPS / NEST pension scheme.

The Clerk was appointed at meeting on 7th November 2022 (Ref: 12).

Asset control Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross-checking on insurance cover

*A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at cost value. The total value of assets is recorded at £7,501. The figure in the asset register **does not correspond** with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.*

Bank Reconciliation Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end-of-year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Reconciled Bank Balances as at 31st March 2023 were confirmed as:

<i>Barclays Community</i>	<i>£27,860.40</i>
<i>Barclays Premium</i>	<i>£ 1,120.64</i>

Reserves General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council have adequate general reserves (£4,065.53) and have identified earmarked reserves (£23,895.51) in their year-end accounts.

Year-end procedures Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End-of-year accounts is prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis.

Sole Trustee The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

There is no evidence in the minutes that the 2022 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council meeting.

Recommendation (7): *It is a requirement to review the Internal Report when received and minute any actions that the council is to take.*

A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on 13th March 2023 (Ref: 8.4)

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 13th March 2023 (Ref: 8.4)

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2022 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 9th May 2022 (Ref: 7.2 & 4).

The Council declared themselves Exempt from External audit for the 2021-2022 financial year.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish meeting was held on 9th May 2022. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for the quality of documentation presented in the Audit File.

Dave Crimmin

Dave Crimmin PSLCC
Heelis & Lodge
6th May 2023

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