
Report To: Full Council **Date:** 25 March 2024

Contact Officer: Paula Harrison

Subject: Internal Audit Update

1. Internal Audit Tuesday 14th May 2024

- 1.1 The Parish Council has an internal audit ahead of the submission of accounts and expenditure to the external auditors which is required by the 1 July 2023. The Internal Auditor is appointed through Auditing Solutions Ltd. The external auditor is appointed nationally for all Parish Councils and is PKF Littlejohn.
- 1.2 The internal audit checklist is attached as **Appendix A**. It is a rigorous check and review of the Parish Council's administration of payments, managements of expenditure in line with financial regulations and management of risk. In 2023, the Internal Auditor made the following recommendations for the financial year 2022-23.
- 1.3 Responses to the Recommendations were undertaken immediately after the last Internal Audit report was circulated in June 2023 and are detailed in the following table.

2. Recommendation

A Councillors Working Group could be formed to review the status of the relevant policies and papers in advance of the Internal Audit visit on 14th May.

Internal Audit Recommendation	Status
R1. <i>The Parish Manager must ensure that in future, the correct period for the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights is established and that the first day of the Notice is at least one day after the formal announcement of the Notice is made.</i>	Notice date 29.06 First day 30.06 ending 10.08
R2. <i>The Parish Manager and Members must ensure that the Council's official website is fully compliant with current Accessibility legislation as amended from time to time.</i>	New website near completion
R3. <i>The Parish Manager and Members must ensure that statutorily required information is published, and easily accessible, on the Council's Official website.</i>	Amended on old and new information
R4. <i>The Parish Manager and Members should ensure that the Council undertakes a Data Impact Assessment, and develops a Document Retention Policy to be properly compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation.</i>	Data Impact and Document Retention Policies completed
R5. <i>The Parish Manager and Members must ensure that the Council undertakes a formal review of its Risk Registers, at least once annually, and readopts them, recording that readoption in the Approved and Published Minutes of the Full Parish Council or one of its committees.</i>	26.06.23 Min.53
R6. <i>The Parish Manager and Members must ensure that the Council undertakes a formal review of its Risk Registers, at least once annually, and readopts them, recording that readoption in the Approved and Published Minutes of the Full Parish Council or one of its committees.</i>	24.07.23 Min. 74
R7. <i>The Parish Manager and Members should consider developing an overarching Playground Management Policy, which links to the Council's Combined Risk Assessments to be formally Reviewed and Adopted by Members at Full Parish Council or one of its committees. (I have attached an example of such a policy as an addendum to this report).</i>	26.06.23 Min.53
R8. <i>The Parish Manager and Members should develop and maintain an appropriate Fixed Asset Register which is compliant with the requirements of the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance guide as amended from time to time . (I have attached an example of a basic Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet Fixed Asset Register as an addendum to this report).</i>	24.07.23 Min. 74
R9. <i>As the Council holds many high value fixed assets, including tractors, grounds maintenance equipment and playground equipment, the Parish Manager and Members should consider adding photographic images of its assets to the register, to assist with potential insurance claims.</i>	24.07.23 Min. 74

<p><i>R10. The Parish Manger should ensure that a column is inserted in the spreadsheet to record the hours that a tractor has completed at the end of each financial year, as this impacts the resale value, maintenance and replacement cycle of the machine.</i></p>	<p>24.07.23 Min. 74</p>
<p><i>R11. The Parish Manager and Members should expeditiously develop an Investment Strategy/Policy as required of all Councils which hold at least £100,000 on deposit.</i></p>	<p>F&S 24.07.23 Min.67</p>
<p><i>R12. The Parish Manager and Members should consider taking action to minimise the risk of having the majority of the Council's funds invested in one financial institution, by seeking additional / alternative investment opportunities for its surplus funds.</i></p>	<p>21.08.23 £57,000 deposited with Acorn Community Bank</p>
<p><i>R13. The Parish Manager and Members should monitor the level of the public funds under its management at all times, ensuring as far as is practicably possible, that these are dispersed amongst a number of different financial organisations to protect the Council from potential losses.</i></p>	<p>As above.</p>