



LCC REPORT FOR
GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON PARISH COUNCIL
INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2024-25
Date: 22nd May 2025

Ref: LCC 25-021

LCC Auditor: Helen Broughton

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I reviewed the documents provided and met with the Clerk at the Council Offices then finalised the information on 22nd May 2025.

BASIS OF REPORT

This internal audit report is based upon the Practitioners Guide (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England 2023 publication.

The scope of this internal audit is focused on assessing the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls and was outlined in the original Letter of Engagement. Where any such controls are found to be deficient, the internal audit will help lead to improvement in those processes.

By applying the principles of internal auditing, outlined in the current Accounts and Audit Regulations and applying the approach to internal audit testing outlined above, every effort is made to ensure that all internal audits are conducted with due professional care, integrity and independence. All conclusions derived from the audit are based upon objective and traceable evidence.

Please note: it would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of the Council in order to detect error or fraud. It is the periodic independent review of a Council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve 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 staff and Councillors and not left for internal audit. (Source: Governance and Accountability for Smaller Councils - A Practitioners' Guide 2023 – Section 4).

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
A	Bookkeeping Arrangements	Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year and are well maintained with sound audit trails.	
B	Council's Financial Regulations have been met with regard to expenditure	<p>VAT reclaims are prepared and submitted in a timely manner in line with the underlying records and in accordance with current HMRC guidelines.</p> <p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted during the year.</p> <p>Parish Clerk and Steward have a credit card. There is no procedure for use.</p> <p>The Council's Financial Regulations have been met in that appropriate authorisations have been given for each level of expenditure.</p>	Adopt a procedure for use of credit card, to include total and monthly and individual transaction limits.

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		Payments were supported by invoices, and expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
C	Review of Internal Controls	<p>I note that there is a 3-year insurance contract. Levels of cover appear adequate.</p> <p>I have noted that Council has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives using their Risk Assessment.</p> <p>The finance committee conducts regular internal audit checks.</p> <p>I understand that the Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit, although this was not minuted.</p>	<p>Insurance cover be reviewed at a meeting of the Council and minuted.</p> <p>Adopt an internal financial controls checklist.</p>
D	Budgetary Controls (Precept requirement)	The annual Precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process.	
D	Budgetary Controls (Budget monitoring)	Progress against the budget was monitored and minuted regularly.	
D	The final Outturn is in line with expectations	The final outturn was materially in line with expectations.	
D	Reserves	<p>The Council has adequate reserves and a reserve policy.</p> <p>The Council does not have an investment strategy.</p>	<p>Publish a list of reserves on the website for transparency purposes.</p> <p>Adopt an Annual Investment Strategy which sets out its policy for managing investments and giving priority to liquidity and security. (See the Local Government Act 2003, section 15(1)(a) and Guidance issued by the</p>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
			Secretary of State under that Act).
E	Income controls	Parish Council is not responsible for allotments or hall hire. Expected income was fully received and properly recorded.	
F	Petty cash controls	Petty cash is not operated by the Council.	
G	Payroll controls	Salaries to employees were paid in accordance with Council approvals.	
H	Asset Controls - all material assets correctly recorded	The current asset register has correctly recorded all material Assets. The correct basis of valuation has been applied.	
H	Asset Controls - all additions correctly recorded	Additions in the year have been correctly recorded within the Cash Book and Register.	
J	Accounting Statements	The Accounting Statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis and were supported by an adequate audit trail.	
K	Limited Assurance Review Exemption	The Council does not meet the exemption criteria.	
L	Information published on website	Information is fully available.	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
M	Exercise of Public Rights	<p>The external auditor commented for 2023/24 that ‘the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to provide electors with a period of 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July, to inspect the accounts.’</p> <p>I have therefore answered ‘no’ to assertion M.</p>	<p>The dates for the exercise of public right be minuted.</p> <p>The Council should ensure that in 2024/25 they comply with the Regulations and respond ‘no’ to assertion 4 in its Annual Governance Statement.</p>
N	AGAR publication Requirements	The Parish Council complied with the publication requirements for the 2023/24 AGAR	
O	Trust funds (If applicable) – the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	The Parish Council does not operate as a trustee.	

Further Recommendations:

Following the completion of the Internal Audit, the Council should undertake a review of effectiveness as per Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

For Transparency purposes I would additionally recommend that the full internal audit report is placed on the website along with an explanation of significant variances and explanation of difference between Box 7 & 8.

Conclusion

The above are recommendations to help the Council improve its processes and in no way detract from the work it, and the Clerk, has already done. I congratulate the Council and Clerk on achieving Quality Gold Status – this is a significant achievement. I was also particularly pleased to see that the Clerk and Councillors have undertaken training courses throughout the year, that there are a number of policies on the website and that the Finance Committee is managing processes well.

In general, I believe that the Council has competent arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its systems of internal financial control are transparent and effective. There are approval and authorisation controls to minimise risk. The audit and management trail for financial transactions is good.

This report should be noted and taken to the next meeting of the Council for minuting to inform them of the Internal Audit work carried out.

I hope that this report is of help to the Council. If you would like any further assistance or clarification, please do contact me.

Helen Broughton
Internal Auditor