HEELIS&LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Ringsfield & Weston Parish Council – 2024/2025

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and the guidance and instruction in the Practitioners Guide 2024. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £13,781 Expenditure: £10,404 Reserves: £11,360

AGAR 2024 / 2025 Completion:
Section One: Yes - unsigned
Section Two: Yes - unsigned
Annual Internal Audit Report 2024 / 2025: Yes
Certificate of Exemption: Yes - unsigned

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

All were found to be in order. 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.

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: 25th September 2024 (Ref: 9a).
Financial Regulations in place: Yes
Reviewed: 25th September 2024 (Ref: 9a) & 29th January 2025 (Ref: 9a).

VAT reclaimed during the year: Yes Registered: No

General Power of Competence: No Policy Review Schedule in place: Yes

There were no tenders during the year that exceeded the £30,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold.

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Campsea Ashe, Suffolk IP13 0PP
Tel: 07732 681125
Email: heather@heelis.eu

Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy PILCM
Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

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: Yes – ZA424189 Expiry 18/06/2025

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

Privacy Policy published: *Yes*

Insurance was in place for the year of audit. The Risk Assessment was reviewed at a meeting held on 25th September 2024 (Ref: 9a).

Statement of Internal Controls in place: Yes

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.

The annual play area inspection has been undertaken during the year, as per the meeting on 29th May 2024.

Fidelity Cover: £250,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within 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.ringsfieldandweston-pc.gov.uk

a) all items of expenditure above £100
Published – Yes – contained within the minutes
b) annual governance statement (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section One Published – No
c) end-of-year accounts (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section Two Published – No
d) internal audit report (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section Four Published – No
e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
Published – Yes
f) the details of public land and building assets (By 1 July)
Published – No
g) minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings
Published – Yes

The Council have yet to meet the requirements of the Transparency Code. Guidance on documents that need to be published can be found on https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388541/Transparency_Code_for_Smaller_Authorities.pdf

***Recommendation (2):** To comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code in accordance with the above-referenced guidance.*

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 - No

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** a council is required to display AGAR's for the five years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 on their website. Please be advised that this should be part of your AGAR publication requirements.

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

Publication Date: 30/05/24 Start Date: 03/06/24 End Date: 12/07/24

Budgetary controls

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

Precept: £9,240.00 (2024 / 2025) Date: 24th January 2024 (Ref: 6f)
Precept: £11,230.76 (2025 / 2026) Date: 29th January 2025 (Ref: 8g)

Good 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: No
Employer PAYE Reference: None
P60's issued: No

Clerk & RFO appointed at meeting on 25th September 2024 (Ref: 16). Issues with the HMRC account have meant that Clerk payments were not made through HMRC.

It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 29th January 2025 (Ref: 16).

***Recommendation (3):** It is a requirement to operate a PAYE scheme.*

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 £14,652. The figure in the asset register corresponds 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 were confirmed as:

Lloyds Treasurers *£11,459.93*

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

The Council have adequate reserves (£11,360)

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 Appendix to the minutes of the meeting on 27th November 2024 states that the Charity Commission has Ringsfield & Weston PC as the sole trustee for the Charity. This statement conflicts with how Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR for 2024 to 2025 have been drafted.

Recommendation (4): *If the council is the sole trustee of the Charity, the councillors should consider this before approving the AGAR sections.*

Internal Audit Procedures

The 2024 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 29th May 2024 (Ref: 1a)

Recommendation (5): *When applicable, the council's response to each of the Internal Audit recommendations should be contained in the minutes of the meeting.*

A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on 29th May 2024 (Ref: 1a)

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 25th September 2024 (Ref: 8f).

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2024 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 29th May 2024 (Ref: 1c & d)

The Council declared themselves Exempt from External audit for the 2023-2024 financial year.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 29th May 2024 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 PSLCC
Heelis & Lodge
11th May 2025