

# HEELIS&LODGE

## Local Council Services • Internal Audit

### **Internal Audit Report for Wickham Bishops 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: £24,568   Expenditure: £31,949   Ear Reserves: £2,000   General: £10,821

#### AGAR 2024 / 2025 Completion:

Section One: **Yes partially, unsigned**

Section Two: **Yes - unsigned**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024 / 2025: **Yes**

Certificate of Exemption: **No**

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

*VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year-end accounts.   The Council hold the General Power of Competence and LGAs137 does not apply.*

*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: **4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Ref: 25/060).**

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**  
Reviewed: **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221).**

VAT reclaimed during the year: **Yes**   Registered: **No**

General Power of Competence: **Yes**   Adopted: **16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Ref: 23/090)**

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 – ZA087504 Expiry 19/11/25

### **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. Due to the financial risk associated with the General Data Protection Regulations, the Council have included this in their 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 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221).*

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.*

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.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

- a) all items of expenditure above £100  
*Published – Yes*
- b) annual governance statement (By 1 July)  
*2024 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes*
- c) end-of-year accounts (By 1 July)  
*2024 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes*
- d) internal audit report (By 1 July)  
*2024 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 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 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

Publication Date: 27/06/24 Start Date: 28/06/24 End Date:08/08/24

<b>Budgetary controls</b>	<p>Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and supporting documents</p> <p>Precept: £22,530 (2024 / 2025) Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Ref: 23/210)  Precept: £24,530 (2025 / 2026) Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221).</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
<b>Income controls</b>	<p>Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
<b>Petty Cash</b>	<p>Associated books and established system in place</p> <p><i>A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork. No Petty Cash held.</i></p>
<b>Payroll controls</b>	<p>PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.  Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures  Records relating to contracts of employment</p> <p>PAYE System in place: <b>Yes – J&amp;M Payroll Services</b>  Employer PAYE Reference: 120/EA98857  P60's issued: No</p> <p><i>The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Payroll is outsourced. All supporting paperwork is in place but a P60 has not been presented in the Audit file.</i></p> <p><b><i>Recommendation (1):</i></b> <i>Copy of P60 to be maintained in Audit File as part of year-end process.</i></p> <p><i>Eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme. The last date of re-declaration of compliance to the Pension Regulator was not provided in the Audit file.</i></p> <p><i>It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Ref: 24/203) and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221).</i></p>

**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 the insurance value. The total value of assets is recorded at £32,668. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.*

*The asset register was approved at the meetings on 3<sup>d</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221) and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Ref: 25/059).*

**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:*

<i>Unity Current</i>	<i>£ 2,108.18</i>
<i>Unity Savings</i>	<i>£10,586.44</i>
<i>Debit Card</i>	<i>-£ 126.15</i>

**Reserves**

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

*The Council have general reserves of £10,821 (44% of Precept) and has identified earmarked reserves in its 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**

*The 2024 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (Ref: 24/093) and the Finance Committee meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Ref: 24F/005)*

*A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out at the Finance Committee meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Ref: 24F/005)*

*Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 3<sup>d</sup> December 2024 (Ref: 24/221).*

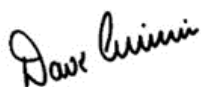
**External Audit**

*The Council formally approved the 2024 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (Ref: 24/091 & 092)*

*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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 her assistance during the course of the audit work and for the high quality of documentation presented in the Audit File.



**Dave Crimmin PSLCC**

**Heelis & Lodge**

1<sup>st</sup> May 2025