

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Ridlington Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Hayley Cawthorne	Date of report:	17/05/2021
Year ending:	31 March 2021	Date audit carried out:	29/04/2021

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the 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 management and not left for internal audit.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

I carried out the year-end audit review of Ridlington Parish Council on 29th April 2021. Like last year, face to face visits are not allowed owing to the Covid pandemic, hence this audit was carried out remotely using Zoom.

Prior to this date, Helen Duckering, the parish clerk, had kindly forwarded me both the end of year accounts and the completed AGAR Part 2 Section 2 form.

I reviewed the information available on www.ridlingtonparishcouncil.org before the remote meeting.

By examination of these documents and records plus further queries, with the clerk during our remote meeting, I tested aspects of the Council's internal controls as required for the Internal Audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 2, and notwithstanding the items noted below, I am satisfied that effective policies and procedures together with systems to manage, monitor and control the Council's business are in place. As a result, I was able to answer 'Yes' to all but one of the relevant questions on the AGAR and have signed as required.

Noted this visit:

1. There were a few of points raised on the internal auditor's report 19/20 (in purple below) which have yet to be addressed. These are as follows:
 - a) Ridlington Parish Council's Asset Register has been and continues to be reviewed. Owing to the lack of historical data regarding purchase prices, no figures have been changed for the 2019/20 year end. The Asset Register is included in the hard copy cash book. It is recommended that a photo is taken/scanned and uploaded onto the parish website for public information.

I was advised that the Asset Register update is still in progress.

There was no up to date Asset Register for the Parish Council available to view at the audit. This is the reasons why 'H' on the AGAR Internal Auditors report was marked with a 'No'. It is recommended that the Parish Council review their risk assessment as soon as possible.

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓
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- b) Bank reconciliations are carried out every six months (November and end of year) owing to the number of meetings and regularity of bank statements for the two bank accounts. It is recommended that the Financial Regulations are changed to reflect this.

The Financial Regulations were last adopted in May 2017. It is advised that the Parish Council consider reviewing and revising their Financial Regulations on an annual basis.

- c) Please ensure the following documents are added to the Parish Council website:

- Code of Conduct
- Asset Register
- Insurance Policy
- Publication Scheme

2. It is strongly recommended that the Parish Council's Standing Orders are reviewed annually and adapted to accommodate changing procedures, such as the changes required as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

These, along with other mandatory policy documents should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Please see the screenshot below exemplifying an appropriate update schedule.

PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS UPDATED MAY 2020					
	Statutory	Councillor Lead	Recent review and approval	Review period	Date for Review
Code of Conduct	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	Annual	
Asset Register	Mandatory/ required by Law		28 May 2020	Annual	
Finance Regulations	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
Register of Interests	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	As required	
Publication Scheme	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	Annual	
Record of Dispensations	-		28 May 2020	As required	
Insurance Policy	Mandatory/ required by Law		28 May 2020	Annual	
Risk Assessment Policy	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	Annual	
GDPR - Data Protection Policy	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - Policy Retention	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - Data Breach Policy	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - Subject Access Request Procedure	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - General Privacy Notice	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - Privacy Notice Staff and Councillors	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
GDPR - Council Consent Form	Mandatory/ required by Law		21 May 2020	3 years	
Standing Orders	Recommended for best practice		21 May 2020	3 years	
Social Media Policy	Recommended for best practice		n/a	3 years	
Training Policy	Recommended for best practice		28 May 2020	3 years	
Equality and Diversity policy	Recommended for best practice		28 May 2020	3 years	
Health and Safety Policy	Recommended for best practice		21 May 2020	3 years	
Record Management and Retention Policy		TBC			
Complaints procedure	Recommended for best practice	TBC	21 May 2020	3 years	
Safeguarding Policy	Recommended for best practice		28 May 2020	3 years	

This report is based on the evidence made available to me. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. Consequently the report is limited to those matters set out.

I would like to wish your council all the best for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Hayley Cawthorne
Internal Auditor to the Council
07855 418693
Hayleyjoycawthorne21@yahoo.co.uk

The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2019	Year ending 31 March 2020
1. Balances brought forward	2,865	1,787
2. Annual precept	3,419	3,995
3. Total other receipts	2	312
4. Staff costs	Restated 2,629	2,944
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	£0	£0
6. Total other payments	1,870	1,852
7. Balances carried forward	1,787	1,298
8. Total cash and investments	1,787	1,298
9. Total fixed assets and long term assets	229,725	229,732
10. Total borrowings	£0	£0

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2020)*. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils, and sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed.