

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 2024

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit.

Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control: -

'The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control. Care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.'

As part of its internal control, the Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received:

CONTROL TEST	TEST	COMMENTS – check documents and initial
	DONE	
	Yes or No	
Ensuring an up-to-date Register of Assets	Yes	Last updated on 01/12/2023
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets		An inspection of assets Report was carried out and presented to the Council at 15/07/24 meeting on 15/07/24 Item 8, Min 24/14
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover	Yes	January 2024 prior to approval of insurance quote at meeting on 15/01/24 Item 5d Min 24/09
Annual review of financial risk	Yes	Reviewed and adopted 18/03/24 Item 16 Min 24/10, published on website
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations	Yes	Updated from current SALC/NALC templates and circulated to Parish Councillors, published on website.
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders	Yes	Financial Regulations and Standing Orders adopted 20/05/24 Item 6 Min. 24/13 and

		published on website. Documents reviewed annually using current SALC/NALC templates.
Regular reporting on performance by contractors	Yes	Works inspected by a Parish Councillor and record kept on file.
Annual review of contracts (where appropriate)	N/A	
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed	Yes	Submitted bi-monthly at Parish Council Meetings for approval, signed by 2 Councillors and minuted. Published on website.
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes	Submitted bi-monthly at Parish Council Meetings for approval, signed by 2 Councillors and minuted.
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted	Yes	Invoices approved and authorised by 2 members of the Council at PC Meeting and minuted.
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked	Yes	Quarterly check of Accounts Spreadsheet by Council at PC Meeting.
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the Accounts Spreadsheet agrees to District Council notification	Yes	By RFO/Clerk and submitted to Council at next meeting following payment, signed by 2 Councillors.
<u>Contracts of employment for staff</u> Contract annually reviewed	Yes	Last review and update 20/11/23 Item 16 Min 23/08
Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation	Yes	Updated employment contract approved by Council and signed by Chairman at meeting on 15/01/24. Min 24/09.
PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer	Yes	Operated by SALC Payroll Services. Payslip approved at Council's by-monthly meeting

<p>Online system run by local authority</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>with 2 signatories signing and online payments made by RFO and signatory.</p>
<p>VAT correctly accounted for VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the Annual Accounts Spreadsheet</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>VAT payments identified in Accounts Spreadsheet and claims submitted annually or when balance reaches £100.</p>
<p>Regular financial reporting to Parish Council</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Bi-monthly at council meetings in the form of a Bank Reconciliation and quarterly review of Accounts Spreadsheet. All minuted.</p>
<p>Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Ongoing and reviewed with half-year and quarterly updates.</p>
<p>Compliance with Local Transparency Code Of 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £500</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Public access to Bank Reconciliations and items of expenditure incurred over £100 shows in minutes.</p>
<p>Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation Requirements –</p> <p>Are the following in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit / Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches <p>Data Retention & Disposal Policies</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p>	<p>Clerk presents all these documents to Council annually and are uploaded to our website, in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation Requirements.</p>
<p>Minutes properly numbered and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping 	<p>(date) Yes</p>	<p>Master copy in Minute folder. Soft copy on Clerk's Laptop and back-up memory card. Public access copies kept on our website.</p>

Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality.	Yes	Online system run by local authority ROI.
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members	Yes	18/07/22 formerly accepted. Min 22/04. Copy updated to website. All Parish Councillors receive a copy on election/co-option and receive any updates from Clerk. All Parish Councillors receive a copy on election/co-option and receive any updates from Clerk – most recent sent 23/07/24
The Good Councillor's Guide	Yes	
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Yes	DAO signed at next meeting following election/co-option. Hard and soft copies held by Clerk.

Date of review of system of Internal Controls.....

5/9/24

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name: Cllr Rosemary Parry

Signature.....



Report submitted to Council

(date).....

16/9/24

(minute reference) 24/15

Next review of system of Internal Controls due September 2025

Additional comments by reviewer: