



BACTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Suzanne Lupin

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INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Bacton Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its December meeting. The January meeting of the council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council has appointed a Finance Working Group. The group meets twice during the financial year. Members monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. A Councillor is appointed to have responsibility for bank reconciliation checks.

The full council meets 10 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the finance working group and the Parish Clerk.

The council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See attached Report. The council appoints a Chairman in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 to be responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful, taking into account all necessary professional advice from the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council’s advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council’s Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council’s finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the council for approval. Two members of the council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council. Where delegation permits, as per s.101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Council’s Financial Regulations, a report will be provided to the next full Council.

Items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, showing which members approved the payment, and any payments are reported to council as made.

Income:

All income is received and banked in the council’s name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The council reviews its risk assessment annually in March, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The council appoints an independent and competent internal auditor who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of it’s:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management

External Audit:

The council’s external auditors, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.

Chairman

RFO/Clerk

Approved and adopted by Bacton Parish Council
Meeting date:

Internal Control Report

Year End 31.03.2024

The Accounts & Audit (Amendment) (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 ie 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 it's internal control, Bacton Parish Council has appointed a Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on an annual basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE	COMMENTS - check documents & initial
	Yes or No	
Appointment of Chairman	YES	
Approval of annual budget and setting of precept	YES	
Ensuring an up to date Register of Assets	YES	
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets	Yes	
Annual review of risk and adequacy of Insurance cover	YES	
Annual review of Fidelity Guarantee and cover	YES	
Annual review of financial risk	YES	
Annual review of risk assessments	YES	
Appointment of Internal Auditor	YES	
Regular reporting on performance by Contractors	YES	
Annual adoption of Financial & Standing Orders	YES	
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	YES	
Recording in the appendices of the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved	YES	To date all expenditure has been approved by the full Council
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted	YES	Receipts & Payments are shown as an appendix to the minutes.
Annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control	YES	

Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked	YES	
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to MSDC notification	YES	
Scrutiny of grants awarded and declared in cashbook	YES	
Monthly bank reconciliation reporting to Parish Council independently reviewed	YES	
Reporting of inter-bank transfers to Parish Council	YES	
Bank Reconciliations periodically verified and signed off by a non-signatory Councillor	YES	
Contracts of employment for staff: Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation	YES	
Contracts of employment annually reviewed	YES NO	Parish Warden Clerk
PAYE/NIC/Pension properly operated by the Council as an employer	YES	Carried by SALC
Monthly budget monitoring statements reported to Full Council	NO	Chairman and Clerk have been monitoring up to Nov 24. Budget statements are now being reported to full Council on a monthly basis.
VAT: payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook	YES	
CIL reporting to Council in accordance with legislation	YES	
CIL reporting to District in accordance with legislation	YES	
CIL expenditure in accordance with legislation	YES	
Compliance with Local Transparency Code 2015: Items of expenditure incurred over £500	YES	
Compliance with DCLG Guide <i>Open & Accountable Local Government</i> 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports	YES	
Compliance with Data Protection Requirements Are the following in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit / Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention & Disposal Policies 	YES	

Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping	YES	
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality	YES	
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members	YES	
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	YES	

Date of review of system of Internal Controls: 5th January 2024

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by: The Clerk, Chairman and Cllr G Wigglesworth

Report submitted to Council: 12th February 2024, minutes ref: Feb 12-9