Internal Audit Report for

Troston Parish Council

for the period ending 31 March 2026

Clerk	Amanda Jackson
RFO (if different)	-
Chairperson	Diana Bilverstone
Precept	£20,000.00
Income	£31,240.20
Expenditure	£38,075.89
General reserves	£12,581.70
Earmarked reserves	£1,994.00
Audit type	Annual **non-exempt authority**
Auditor name	**Kim Puttock**

Introduction

The primary objective of internal audit is to review, appraise and report upon the adequacy of internal control systems operating throughout the council. To achieve this SALC adopt a predominantly systems-based approach to audit.

The council's internal control system comprises the whole network of systems established within the council to provide reasonable assurance that the council's objectives will be achieved, with reference to:

- the effectiveness of operations
- the economic and efficient use of resources
- compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws, and regulations
- the safeguarding of assets and interests from losses of all kinds, including those arising from fraud, irregularity, and corruption

- the integrity and reliability of information, accounts, and data

Methodology

When conducting the audit, the internal auditor may:

- conduct a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year in order to be able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- review the reliability and integrity of financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information
- review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets
- appraise the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed, identify opportunities to improve performance and recommend solutions to problems
- review the established systems to ensure compliance with those policies, procedures, laws, and regulations which could have a significant impact on operations, and determine whether the council complies
- review the operations and activities to ascertain whether results are consistent with objectives and whether they are being conducted as planned

Section 1 – Financial Regulation and Standing Orders The internal auditor will check the date the Council conducted its annual review of both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and in particular check if these are based on NALC'S latest model which include legislative changes.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Have Standing Orders been adopted, up to date and reviewed annually?	*Yes*	Council's Standing Orders, as seen on the Parish Council's website show an adopted date of February 2026 and are based on the latest model published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), April 2025. The Standing Orders are compliant with legislation and have been adapted (where they are not statutory requirements) to ensure that they are relevant to the Parish Council. Council approved its Standing Orders at a meeting of full council held on 3 February 2026 (min ref: 12). *COMMENT: Square brackets feature throughout creating uncertainty as to whether those elements apply to the council. It is also not clear if it is the Clerk or Full Council who grant dispensations. At the next annual review Council might wish to consider reviewing the items in square brackets.*
Are Financial Regulations up to date and reviewed annually?	*Yes*	Financial Regulations, as seen on the Council's website were reviewed at the full council meeting on 3 February 2026 (min ref: 12) and are based on the NALC Model Financial Regulations published in March 2025. *COMMENT: Council might wish to review the NALC Advice Note – Procurement, 3 February 2026 and ensure any applicable revisions are incorporated at the next annual review.*
Has the Council properly tailored the Financial Regulations?	*Yes*	The Council's Financial Regulations have been tailored to the Parish Council

Has the Council appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)?[1]	*Yes*	In accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (financial administration), the Council has appointed a person (the Clerk) to be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the relevant authority. Council's Financial Regulation 1.5 confirms that the Clerk is so appointed, and this was reconfirmed by full council at its meeting on 6 May 2025 (min ref: 1e)
Additional comments:		

[1] Section 151 Local Government Act 1972

Section 2 – Budgetary controls The internal auditor will seek verification that budgets are properly prepared, agreed and monitored. In particular they will look for evidence of good practice in that the key stages of the budgetary process have been followed		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Verify that budget has been properly prepared and agreed	*Yes*	The budget for the year 2025/26 was formally approved at the full council meeting on 15 November 2024 (min ref: 11). *COMMENT: Council has demonstrated best practice by evidencing within the minutes the actual budget being set alongside the reasoning for such a budget thereby ensuring transparency in the budgetary process followed by the council.*
Verify that the precept amount has been agreed in full Council and clearly minuted	*Yes*	The precept was set at £20,000 for 2025/2026, as confirmed by full council on 15 November 2024 (min ref: 11), with the paperwork demonstrating that this was a £6.02 per annum increase on the council tax for a property in Band D over that set the previous year. *COMMENT: In accordance with best practice, council records in the minutes the precept being set and the impact that this would have on a Band D Dwelling in monetary terms.*
Regular reporting of expenditure and variances from budget	*Yes*	The minutes evidence that Council carried out its regular review covering the budget for the current year with a review of income and expenditure against budget along with forecasts for the remainder of the year at the full council meetings on 6 May 2025 (min ref: 11c), 4 November 2026 (min ref: 12b) and 13 January 2026 (min ref: 10b). Council's standing orders confirm that financial reporting will be provided as soon as practicable after the 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year.

		COMMENT: Council is advised to consider either reporting, in accordance with its own standing order 17c a quarterly statement showing evidence of comparisons between budgeted and actual income and expenditure to form the basis of approval for virements or amending Standing Order 17c to reflect the frequency with which budget monitoring exercises are carried out.
Reserves held – general and earmarked[2]	*Yes*	The Council, as at year-end, had Earmarked Reserves totalling £1,994.00 with the balance being General Reserves of £12,581.70 with overall reserves standing at £14,575.70. *COMMENT: Council is advised to note guidance as issued by Proper Practices which states that it is regarded as acceptable for a council's general (non-earmarked revenue) reserves to be equal to 3 to 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure. There is no upper limit for earmarked reserves, but they should be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level subject to regular review and justification (at least annually).* **RECOMMENDATION: Council should seek to adopt a General Reserve Policy which would provide clarity on the reasoning behind the holding of and intended level of general reserves to be maintained to ensure that the council achieves the recommended levels.**

Additional comments:
Council has followed the recommended key stages as to the budgetary process for the year:
- decide the form and level of detail of the budget;
- review the current year budget and spending;
- determine the cost of spending plans;
- assess levels of income;
- bring together spending and income plans;
- provide for contingencies and consider the need for reserves;
- approve the budget;
- confirm the precept or rates and special levies; and
- review progress against the budget regularly throughout the year.

[2] In accordance with proper practices, the generally accepted minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months of Net Revenue Expenditure

Section 3 – Proper bookkeeping The internal auditor will look at the methods and processes used to manage the council's accounts and in particular that it provides clear data for reporting and monitoring purposes. This includes checking information is accurate, kept up to date, referenced and verified.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Is the ledger maintained and up to date?	*Yes*	The council uses an excel spreadsheet to produce reports on a Receipts and Payments basis and ensures that the financial transactions of the parish council are as accurate as reasonably practicable. All transactions are well referenced and provide an effective tool for the basis of the council's internal controls. It provides data for analysis allowing the RFO to produce clear financial management reports. *COMMENT: Council might wish to ensure that the cashbook and/or minutes make reference to the powers used to incur expenditure. Statutory powers are granted by Parliament and give local councils the choice or opportunity to take action and are therefore discretionary. Like all powers given to public bodies the powers of local councils are defined in detail in legislation and these details may include a requirement to obtain the consent of another body. Local Councils must exercise their powers subject to the provisions of the general law.* **RECOMMENDATION: given the level of council's finances, consideration should be given to the use of an accounting package which produces a suite of tools to allow for reporting on a Receipts and Payments basis. This would allow the automation of the council's transactions involving income and expenditure as well as reports and financial statements.**
Is the ledger on the correct basis in relation to the gross income/expenditure? (under Proper Practices, Councils are required to work on an Income & Expenditure basis when their gross income, or gross expenditure, exceeds £200,000 for 3 consecutive years)	*Yes*	Council's gross income and expenditure level is below the threshold of £200,000 and has been for three continuous years. Council's operating under this limit may choose either to report on an income and expenditure basis or on a receipts and payments basis. Council has elected to report its financial matters on a receipts and payments basis/income and expenditure basis

Is the cash book up to date and regularly verified?	*Yes*	Council follows Proper Practices in ensuring that its accounting procedure gives an accurate presentation of the authority's true financial position and provides good evidence to support the council's underlying statements which are verified by council. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) has ensured that there are clear financial management reports submitted to the council on a regular basis.
Is the arithmetic correct?	*Yes*	A number of spot checks were carried out and the functionality of the cashbook was found to be in order. *COMMENT: The RFO has shown best practice by ensuring, for further transparency and scrutiny, that all payments and receipts are referenced with a description as to the expenditure and income being incurred to ensure the integrity of data being input and processed.*
Additional comments:		

Section 4 – Payment controls The internal auditor will specifically check bank reconciliation including credit/debit cards and management approval processes and evidence that internal Financial Regulations (FO) are being followed. The internal auditor will examine how regular payments are managed and specifically seek evidence that these have been brought back to the Council for verification purposes especially where the actual payment made differs from the amount previously agreed. VAT should be clearly identified including evidence that claims have been correctly managed. The internal auditor will check if the Council has a clear understanding on eligibility in relation to the General Power of Competence and that s.137 has been correctly applied and managed.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Is there supporting paperwork for payments with appropriate authorisation?	*Yes*	A selection of expenditure items were reviewed and cross-checked against the cash book, invoices and bank statements. At each full council meeting a list of payments is presented to ensure formal approval of expenditure. This demonstrates good practice in that there are measures in place that help safeguard public money supported by a straightforward and clear audit trail for each payment. *COMMENT: To provide clarity to the reader as to the council's financial transactions the Clerk includes within the minutes the schedule of authorised payments.* For the year under review, there were no tenders or contracts over £30,000 including VAT, for which the council needed to comply with the requirements of the Procurement Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices. Nor were there any contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, for which the Clerk needed to advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation.

Where applicable, are internet banking transactions properly recorded and approved?	*Yes*	Internet banking is operated in accordance with the Council's own Financial Regulations and is used for the settlement of the Council's expenditure. *COMMENT: To comply with the council's own Financial Regulations, the Clerk has identified that a change needs to be made to the bank mandate and has confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the bank mandate is under review and an additional signatory will be added post the May 2026 full council meeting. This will ensure that the Council operates with a complex mandate which follows a dual authorisation process.*
Is VAT correctly identified, recorded, and claimed within time limits?	*Yes*	VAT is identified in the cash book with the reclaim for the period covering part of the 2024/25 and up to 31 January 2026 of the current financial year in the sum of £4,774.45 being verified in the cashbook and bank statements. **RECOMMENDATION: Council is advised to reclaim VAT in accordance with their own Financial Regulations 13.6 which states "Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made at least annually at the end of the financial year."**
Has the Council adopted the General Power of Competence (GPOC) and is there evidence this is being applied correctly?[3]	*No*	Council has not adopted the General Power of Competence.
Are payments under s.137[4] separately recorded, minuted and is there evidence of direct benefit to electorate?	*Yes*	Payments identified in the cashbook as being made under this power for the year under review totalled £75 and were separately recorded and were of a direct benefit of the electorate. The donation to the Troston Village Hall of £45 was approved at the full council meeting on 6 October 2025 (min ref: 10), however, the donation to the Royal British Legion was not approved at a full council meeting, but was included on the payments list provided to the full council meeting on 4 November 2025 (min ref: 12).

[3] Localism Act
[4] *Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. The basic power is for a local council to spend money (subject to the statutory limit – of £11.10 per elector) on purposes for the direct benefit of its area, or part of its area, or all or some of its inhabitants.*

		RECOMMENDATION: Council is advised to minute authorisation for all expenditure under s137
Where applicable, are payments of interest and principal sums in respect of loans paid in accordance with agreements?	*N/A*	Council has no such loan.
Additional comments: Council might wish to consider, to show good practice, implementing a system whereby evidence is retained showing which Councillors authorised the on-line payments thereby ensuring that there is an effective system in place to reduce the risks of error for such payments. This not only protects the RFO but will fulfil an internal control objective to ensure the safeguarding of public money.		

Section 5 – Income controls The internal auditor will seek evidence to ensure income is correct managed – recorded, banked, and reported and test mechanisms used to achieve this.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	*Yes*	A number of items of income were cross checked against cash book and bank statement and found to be in order and recorded in accordance with Proper Practices. The RFO has ensured that the accounting records contain all day-to-day entries of all sums of money received.
Is income reported to full council?	*Partial*	Not all income received is reported within the financial reports submitted to full council. **RECOMMENDATION: That council record the income received in council minutes providing a clear financial audit trail.**
Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax Authority's notification?	*Yes*	Council received precept in the sum of £20,000 from West Suffolk District Council for the period under review as reported to full council within its Financial Reports at its meeting on 6 May 2025 (min ref: 11a). Evidence was provided showing a full audit trail from Precept being discussed and approved to being served on the Charging Authority to receipt of same in the Council's Bank Account.
If appropriate, are CIL reporting schedules in accordance with the Regulations?[5]	*N/A*	The district in which the parish council lies does not operate CIL.
Is CIL income reported to the council?	*N/A*	
Does unspent CIL income form part of earmarked reserves?	*N/A*	
Has an annual report been produced?	*N/A*	
Has it been published on the authority's website?	*N/A*	
Additional comments:		

[5] Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

Section 6 – Petty cash The Internal Auditor will seek evidence that the Council has followed its own policies, procedures, and verification processes and that these are up to date.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Is petty cash in operation?	*No*	Council does not operate a petty cash system.
If appropriate, is there an adequate control system in place?	*N/A*	
Additional comments:		

Section 7 – Bank reconciliation The internal auditor will seek to establish that the Council understands and can evidence good practice and internal control mechanisms in relation to bank reconciliation.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Is bank reconciliation regularly completed and reconciled with the cash book and cover every account?	*Yes*	A number of samples were tested. There is evidence of good financial practice, and the Council has implemented a system whereby bank reconciliation is correctly verified by the Council. This not only safeguards the Responsible Financial Officer but also fulfils an internal control objective. *COMMENT: Council has understood that the bank reconciliation is a key tool for management as it assists with the regular monitoring of cash flows which aids decision-making, particularly when there are competing priorities.*
Do bank balances agree with bank statements?	*Yes*	Bank balances agree with period end statements and, as at year end (31st March 2026) the balance across the council's accounts stood at £14,575.70 as recorded in the Draft Statement of Accounts and on the Year-end Bank Reconciliation.
Is there regular reporting of bank balances at Council meetings?	*Yes*	Balances across the council's accounts are reported at meetings of full Council. The minutes of full council meetings, demonstrate that a review of the bank reconciliation versus the bank statements has been undertaken. This is not only good practice but is also a safeguard for the RFO and fulfils one of the authority's internal control objectives. The bank reconciliation is a key tool for management as it assists with the regular monitoring of cash flows and therefore aids decision-making.

Section 8 – Payroll controls The Internal Auditor will check salaries were approved in accordance with PAYE, NI, Pension and that there is a clear understanding that the clerk is not self-employed. The Internal Auditor will also review how payroll is managed including evidence of approval of payslips.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Do all employees have contracts of employment?	*Yes*	Council had 1 employee on its payroll at the period end of 31 March 2026. Employment contracts were not reviewed during the internal audit but the Clerk to the Council has confirmed that all staff have a Contract of Employment in place.
Has the Council approved salary paid?	*Yes*	All salary payments are presented to full council for approval and payment is made via internet banking in accordance with Council's own Financial Regulations. *COMMENT: Council has noted the requirement to ensure that it formally approves amendments to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment.*
Are all employees paid at least the minimum wage?	*Yes*	Employee is paid above the national minimum wage.
Are arrangements in place for authorising of the payroll and payments to the council? Does this include a verification process for agreeing rates of pay to be applied?	*Yes*	There are suitable payroll arrangements in place utilising the SALC Payroll service which ensures the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and wages, and associated liabilities and as such the council has complied with its duties under legislation.
Do salary payments include deductions for PAYE/NIC? Is PAYE/NIC paid promptly to HMRC?	*Yes*	The payroll function for the year under review is operated in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs guidelines and outsourced to Suffolk Association of Local Councils. Cross-checks were completed on three payments covering salary and PAYE were found to be in order. Deductions paid to HM Revenue and Customs during the year under review were made in accordance with timescales as set out in the regulations.

Is there evidence that the Council is aware of its pension responsibilities? Are pension payments in operation?[6]	*Yes*	Council is aware of its pension responsibilities and payments are made in accordance with timescales agreed with the Council's Pension Provider.
Have pension re-declaration duties been carried out	*Yes*	Council last carried outs its re-enrolment duties in February 2023. Council is aware that every three years further re-enrolment duties will apply. The clerk has confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the pension re-enrolment due in 2026 was completed in 2026, however this was not minuted. **RECOMMENDATION: Council should ensure that it records evidence that it has complied with its duties as an employer with regards to automatic enrolment and that it has completed and submitted a declaration of compliance to the Pension Regulator. Re-declaration is required every three years.**
Are there any other payments (e.g.: expenses) and are these reasonable and approved by the Council?	*Yes*	There is a satisfactory expense system in place and all expenses claimed are approved by full council with supporting paperwork in place and reimbursed in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations. *COMMENT: In accordance with its own Financial Regulations (7.1) council might want to ensure that there are sufficient bank signatories on their bank account to ensure that recipients are not required to authorise their own payments.*
Additional comments:		

[6] The Pension Regulator – website click here

Section 9 – Year End procedures		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Are appropriate accounting procedures used?	*Yes*	Accounts are produced on a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis and all found to be in good order.
Financial trail from records to presented accounts	*Yes*	The end of year accounts and supporting documentation were well presented for the internal auditor review. There is a full audit trail from records to presented accounts.
Has the appropriate end of year AGAR[7] documents been completed?	*Yes*	The Council is a smaller authority with gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000, it will be required to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Form 3. The Accounting Statements were submitted in draft form for the internal audit review, and it is assumed that the figures submitted will be those that are replicated in their entirety onto the AGAR.
Did the Council meet the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt?	*N/A*	As the Parish Council had gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 it could not declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review.
During the period in question did the small authority demonstrate that it correctly provided for the exercise of public right as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015?	*Yes*	During the review of the publication requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, it is noted that, for the year 2024- 2025, the Council correctly provided for the exercise of elector's rights during Summer 2025. The RFO had set the dates for the inspection of the Council's accounts and associated documents as 3 June 2025 to 14 July 2025 with the date of the notice being 1 June 2025. *COMMENT: within the Annual Internal Audit Report, internal control objective test M requires the internal auditor to establish whether the parish council correctly provided for the exercise and published a copy of the required "Public Notice" by ensuring that it clearly identified the statutory 30*

[7] Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

		working day period when the Authority's records are available for public inspection. This is evidenced by the notice on the website which contains the period for the exercise of public right; details of the manner in which the documents can be inspected; the name and address of the external auditor and the provisions as contained under section 25 and section 27 of the Act.
Have the publication requirements been met in accordance with the Regulations?[8]	*Yes*	In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as a smaller authority with either income or expenditure exceeding £25,000 but not exceeding £6.5 million, it is confirmed that the Council did comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for the year ending 31st March 2025 as it published the following on its website: Annual Internal Audit Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement Section 2 - Accounting Statements Section 3 - The External Auditor Report and Certificate Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15(2) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. *Comment: Council might wish to note that there is a requirement to ensure that Sections 1, 2 and 3 are published and remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication.*
Additional comments:		

[8] Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Section 10 – Risk management The internal auditor will expect to find evidence of the management of risks from identification of what those are for each individual Council through to how these will be managed and the controls in place to mitigate these and that these have been approved by the Council.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Is there evidence of risk assessment documentation?	*Yes*	The risk assessment documentation as reviewed provides details of the risks associated with the functioning of a smaller authority and the measures that the Council will undertake to mitigate such risks. The Risk Register for the year under review was considered and adopted by full council at its meeting of 3 March 2026 (min ref: 14).
Is there evidence that risks are being identified and managed?	*Yes*	Council is aware that risk assessment needs to focus on the safety of the parish council's assets, and particularly its money. There is evidence that overall, the parish council has taken action to identify and assess those risks and has considered what actions or decisions it needs to take during the year to avoid financial or reputational consequences. *COMMENT: Council has in place monitoring documents which identify the risks involved and the potential for improvements to its arrangements to protect public money. It provides the opportunity for reviews of operational as well as financial and governance reviews by members to ensure that it has mitigation measures in place to address the risks associated with the council's day to day operations.*

Does the Council have appropriate and adequate insurance cover in place for employment, public liability and fidelity guarantee ***and*** *has been reviewed on an annual basis?*	*Yes*	Council has insurance in place under a specialist policy for local councils with Ecclesiastical Insurance on a 12-month agreement and shows core cover for the following: • Public and Products Liability: £10,000,000 • Fidelity Guarantee of £250,000. *COMMENT: Council has followed recommended guidance by ensuring that its Fidelity Cover is equal to at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants to be received in the following April.*
Evidence that internal controls are documented and regularly reviewed[9]	*Yes*	At the meeting of full council on 3 March 2026, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, council confirmed that the financial and management systems of the council were sound and adequate and internal control arrangements were efficient and effective to address the risks associated with the management of public finances. *COMMENT: Council continues with the good practice of appointing a councillor(s) to review the system of internal control via specific tests and as such has demonstrated that it has understood the requirements to have in place safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money.*
Evidence that a review of the effectiveness of internal audit was conducted during the year, including consideration of the independence and competence of the internal auditor prior to their appointment[10]	*Yes*	In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Parish Council formally reviewed the scope and effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements at the full council meeting on 6 May 2025 (min ref: 11h(i)).
Additional comments: the Council has identified several risks to and taken steps to control these. These are clearly identified and approved by the Council**.** In accordance with proper practices the council has demonstrated it has taken steps to manage key risks in a way it can justify to a level which is tolerable by transferring the risks and taking out insurance, and that the review of insurance cover has been reported back to full council and duly minuted. By reviewing the terms of reference for internal audit the council has followed guidance and demonstrates it recognises that the internal audit function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily.		

[9] Accounts and Audit Regulations
[10] Practitioners Guide

Section 11 – Asset control		
Section 11 – Asset control The Internal Audit will be seeking to establish if there is a list of assets in accordance with proper practices including the date of acquisition, location, and value. This extends to checking policies (with evidence of review) and that the Council has applied the documented approach in practice. The Internal Auditor will check not only valuation processes but the existence of reserve budgets for depreciation and adequacy of insurance. A clear audit trail should be available when items are purchased including minutes to evidence approval.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Does the Council maintain a register of material assets it owns and manage this in accordance with proper practices?[11]	*Yes*	The draft Asset Register submitted for the internal audit review, was reviewed during the year and reflects those items listed under insurance and within the Parish Council's remit for maintenance and ownership.
Is the value of the assets included? (Note value for insurance purposes may differ)	*Yes*	It is noted that the declared value for all assets at year-end (31.03.2026) is £68,911.99 which reflects overall movement in the asset register covering acquisitions and disposals. For comparison, the declared value of the asset register as at 31.03.2025 was £68,904.99. *Comment: Council is mindful of the guidance within the Practitioner's Guide 2025 on the valuation of its assets and has ensured that where the acquisition value of the asset at the time of first recording is used, that method of valuation has been consistently applied.*
Are records of deeds, articles, land registry title number available?	*N/A*	Records of deeds, articles, land registry title number were not reviewed during the internal audit which was carried out via remote means
Are copies of licences or leases available for assets sited at third party property?	*N/A*	Council has not declared that it has any assets located on third party property.
Is the asset register up to date and reviewed annually?	*Yes*	The asset register was reviewed in the year under review at the full council meeting on 13 January 2026 (min ref: 11) with the values submitted on the Draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the internal audit review and shows an asset value of £68,912 which agrees with that detailed in the Asset Register.

[11] Practitioners Guide

Cross checking of insurance cover	*Yes*	The asset register lists items under insurance that fall within the Council's remit for maintenance and ownership. The register states value as at the date of acquisition and where assets have been gifted or have an unknown value been given an approximate value.
Additional comments: Councils should be mindful of the guidance in the Practitioners Guide (2025) regarding valuation of assets and ensure that where the acquisition value of the asset at the time of first recording is used, that method of valuation has been consistently applied and if/where amended it will need to publish and provide explanations in changes in value to any previously recorded assets.		

Section 12 – Assertion 10 The internal auditor will be checking that the council complies to the new assertion 10 introduced in the Practitioners' Guide 2025.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Has the Council registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)?[12]	*Yes*	The Council is correctly registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a Data Controller in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation.
Is there an adopted council publication scheme and is it reviewed regularly?	*Partial*	As defined under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, council has adopted and published a Publication Scheme, however, it is not clear from the document available on the council's website that Council reviewed its Model Publication Scheme in 2025/26. The document available on the website does not have a date of review/adoption. *COMMENT: The document refers to a schedule of charges which was not included. Council should consider publishing the schedule of charges alongside the Model Publication Scheme.* **RECOMMENDATION: Council should seek to ensure that their Publication Scheme is reviewed at least annually.**
Is the Council compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements?[13] *Councils must:* • *Comply with their legal & statutory obligations under UK GDPR & The Data Protection Act 2018* • *Process personal data lawfully, fairly and in line with the prescribed data protection principles* • *Recognise their role as both data controller and data processor*	*Partial*	Council has still to show full compliance with the regulations. All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection. The following are in place: • Privacy statement (undated) • General Data Protection Regulations 2018 document (undated)

[12] Data Protection Act 2018
[13] UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

		● Procedures for dealing with subject access requests – included in the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 document (undated) ● Data Protection and Information Security Policy (dated September 2015) **RECOMMENDATION: Council needs to have adopted a data protection policy that is reviewed at least once annually.** **RECOMMENDATION: Council should ensure that existing policies which are currently undated are reviewed and an adoption/review date included.** **RECOMMENDATION: Council should consider adopting procedures on how they will handle a freedom of information request, procedures for dealing with data breaches and data retention policies including disposal.**
Has the Transparency Code been correctly applied, and information published in accordance with current legislation?	*Yes*	Whilst the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 applies to local authorities, including parish councils with annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) over £200,000, Smaller Authorities with total turnover or expenditure greater than £25,000 but under £200,000, should as best practice comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015; the government believes that in principle all data held and managed by local authorities should be made available to the public unless there are specific sensitivities to doing so, as per the Practitioners' Guide 5.127. The Council is currently publishing Individual items of expenditure that exceed £500 (currently published on a quarterly basis). *COMMENT: Council might wish to review its provisions and consider whether it might be able to work towards ensuring compliancy with the requirements of publishing the following data on its website in accordance with the required timescales:* *Publish quarterly:*

		• *Individual items of expenditure that exceed £500 (currently published on an annual basis);* • *Government Procurement Card transactions; Invitations to tender for contracts over £5,000;* • *Details of contracts that exceed £5,000.* *Publish annually:* • *Details of all land and building assets;* • *Grants to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations;* • *Organisational Chart.*
Has the Council published a website accessibility statement on their website in line with Regulations?[14]	*Yes*	Council reviewed and adopted a website accessibility statement at the full council meeting on 3 March 2026 (min re: 16).
Has website accessibility been tested, at least annually?	*Yes*	Council have taken necessary steps to review website accessibility through a third party that has carried out a website accessibility audit on 11th March 2026.
Does the council have, as a minimum, a single generic email address on an authority owned domain, for correspondence?[15] *For example clerk@abccouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abccouncil.org.uk*	*Yes*	Council operates with a .gov.uk email address for the Clerk. Best practice is for all council (clerk, councillors, other staff) to have matching email: Cllr.bobsmith@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or cllr.bobsmith@abcparishcouncil.org.uk If not, free email services are permitted currently, such as, cllrbobsmith@gmail.com but NOT personal email addresses e.g. bobsmith1968@yahoo.co.uk *COMMENT: Authority-owned email accounts ensures that sensitive information is handled in a controlled environment with appropriate security measures. This aligns with GDPR principles such as data minimisation, integrity and confidentiality.*

[14] Website Accessibility Regulations 2018
[15] Practitioners Guide

Does the council have an IT policy that is tailored to the council? [16]	*Yes*	The council has adopted an IT policy that has been personalised for the specific use of the council. This policy was approved at the full council meeting on 3 February 20206 (min ref: 13).
Additional comments:		

[16] Practitioners Guide

Section 13 – Internal audit The internal auditor will revisit weaknesses and recommendations previously identified to see if these have been addressed. They will also check if any changes introduced require further verification to ensure effectiveness of the corrective action taken.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Has the Council considered the previous internal audit report?	*Yes*	The Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31 March 2025 has been considered and reviewed by full council at their meeting on 6 May 2025 (min ref: 11h(i)) and accepted at the same meeting of full council.
Has appropriate action been taken regarding the recommendations raised?	*Yes*	The formal recommendations raised within the internal audit report for the year ending 31st March 2025 were as follows: and those in **bold** are outstanding: (list recommendations) • NALC released an updated version of the model standing orders in April 2025. NALC have updated Model Standing Order (England) section 18 to comply with new procurement legislation and ensure consistency with the NALC Model Financial Regulations. The changes are to 18.a.v, 18.c, 18.d, and 18.f. NALC have also updated Model Standing Order (England) section 14 to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements. 14.a, 14.b, and 14.c have been removed. They have also changed the language in the document to gender-neutral terms to align with the Civility and Respect Policy. • NALC have released an updated version of the model Financial Regulations in March 2025. • Risk Assessment was not reviewed during 2024/2025 but is scheduled to be carried out at the next meeting of council held 6th May 2025. • Council should review its insurance policy annually to ensure appropriate cover is in place. This should be documented within the council minutes as being completed. Council should review its insurance cover against its asset register to be certain all items have adequate cover.

		• Council should ensure that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Parish Council formally reviewed the scope and effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements. • When completing the annual review of the insurance policy council should note within its minutes that assets are adequately covered within the schedule. • To ensure that content meets the WCAG 2.2 Standard under Regulation 8 of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations council should look to complete an up to date test of the site and document this within its Accessibility Statement
Has the Council confirmed the appointment of an internal auditor?[17]	*Yes*	SALC were appointed as the Council's internal auditors for the year ending 31st March 2026 at the full council meeting on 3 March 2026 (min ref: 13)
Has the letter of engagement been approved by full council?[18]	*Yes*	The letter of engagement was approved by full council at the meeting on 3 March 2026 (min ref: 13). *COMMENT: Council has understood the requirement to ensure that it has a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities for internal audit, audit planning and timing of visits, reporting requirements; access to information; period of engagement and remuneration.*
Additional comments:		

[17] Practitioners' Guide
[18] Practitioners' Guide

Section 14 – External audit for the period under review The internal auditor will revisit the external audit so that previous weaknesses and recommendations can be considered.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Has the Council considered the previous external audit report?[19]	*Yes*	At the meeting of full Council on 2 September 2025 (min ref: 12h), Council considered the report from the External Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2025. The Notice of Conclusion was seen on the Council's website.
Has appropriate action been taken regarding the comments raised?	*Yes*	The following matters had come to the external auditor's attention: ● The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR. ○ Unpresented cheques from 2023 amounting to £65 are included in the bank reconciliation. These should have been written back as they are now out of date. The figures in Boxes 6, 7 and 8 should read £13,766, £21,319 and £21,319 respectively. ● Section 1, Assertion 5 has been incorrectly completed. Information received from the internal auditor highlights that the risk management arrangements were not reviewed or approved during the year under review. As a result, this assertion should have been answered 'No'. *COMMENT: Councillors accepted the points raised at the full council meeting on 2 September 2025 (min ref: 12h) and had no questions*
Additional comments:		

[19] Regulation 20 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 – *following completion of an audit the Council should note that it is the Council as a whole (i.e., All members) and not a committee that should receive and consider the audit letter (including Annual Return and Certificate) from the local auditor as soon as reasonably practicable and the minutes should reflect that these have been received.*

Section 15 – Additional information The internal auditor will look for additional evidence of good record keeping, compliance with data protection regulations, freedom of information and website accessibility regulations.		
Evidence		*Internal auditor commentary*
Was the annual meeting held in accordance with legislation? [20]	*Yes*	The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held on 6 May 2026 and the first item on the agenda was the election of a Chair.
Is there evidence that Minutes are administered in accordance with legislation? [21]	*Yes*	Council is aware that that under LGA 1972 schedule 12, paragraphs 41(1) and 44 the draft minutes of a meeting should be formally approved (with any necessary amendments) at the next meeting. At each meeting, the Chair is given formal approval to sign the minutes. *COMMENT: Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 41(2) states that the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of a local authority may be recorded on loose leaves consecutively numbered. Council may wish to adopt this approach.*
Is there a list of members' interests held?	*Yes*	Evidence of the Register of Interests for all current Parish Councillors was seen on the District Authority's website via a direct link from the Council's own website.
Does the Council have any Trustee responsibilities and if so, are these clearly identified in a Trust Document?	*N/A*	Council does not have any Trustee Responsibilities.
Is there evidence that electronic files are backed up?	*No*	Councils Risk Assessment states that electronic records are stored on the Clerk's computer. *COMMENT: To mitigate the risk associated with loss of data due to a computer malfunction, Council may wish to consider backing up the council's data ensuring it is stored appropriately.*

[20] The Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, paragraph 7 (2) and Schedule 15 (2)
[21] Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Local Government Act 1972, and the Localism Act 2011

Do terms of reference exist for all committees and is there evidence these are regularly reviewed?	*N/A*	Council does not operate a committee structure.
Additional comments:		

Signed: Kim Puttock

Date of Internal Audit review: 25 April 2026 & 2 May 2026

Date of Internal Audit Report: 2 May 2026

On behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils