

Bearpark Parish Council – Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Objectives and scope of the Audit

To examine the system of internal controls to ensure that the Parish Council may obtain an adequate level of assurance for its activities.

The following areas of activity have been examined and tested by Internal Audit:

- Payroll
- Creditors
- Risk Management
- Income collection and Banking arrangements
- Assets
- Budgetary Control (including year-end procedures)

The audit findings of this report have been discussed with the Clerk of the Council and any audit recommendations have been agreed with her.

Payroll

The Parish Council has at the time of audit 1 employee (Clerk). Any increases in the rates of pay is determined by the National Pay Award and formally agreed by the council. This was last reviewed in July 2025 following the national agreement and adjustments made to the rate of pay accordingly.

Creditors

The Clerk is the only Officer responsible for Finance and Administration.

Compensating controls are in place. Relevant signing authority is carried out for all payments which are prepared by the Responsible Finance Officer (Clerk) and presented together with the supporting information each month. All payments are recorded in the minutes, which are signed by the Chair.

Examination of all payments between April 2025 to March 2026 were found to be properly paid and recorded and were in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

Risk Management

The level and range of insurance cover appears to be adequate for the size of the Council. A detailed Risk Register is in place and this has been examined as part of the Internal Audit.

The Council takes steps each year to reduce its risks by reviewing various policies and Standing Orders to ensure they are fit for purpose.

I am satisfied that the necessary controls have been put in place to ensure that the Council acts within its statutory and regulatory framework.

Income collection and Banking arrangements

All income received is recorded on a receipts and payments spreadsheet and reported in the Council minutes for the month in which it was received.

Internal Audit examined all the income records (mainly precept) for the year and confirmed that all income had been properly recorded.

The reconciliation of the bank statements at the end of the year to the Income and Expenditure records and the end of year fund balance.

Accounting Records

All income and expenditure are recorded and the Clerk carries out monthly bank reconciliations.

Security/Assets

An asset register is kept and has been reviewed as part of the Internal Audit. This is to be agreed formally with the end of year statement of accounts.

Budgetary Control

The budget preparation and the Capital Expenditure for the coming year were agreed in January 2025 along with a commitment to reviews its earmarked reserves, projects, initiatives and any associated budget implications.

Budgetary control is carried out using the income and expenditure spreadsheet.

Assertion 10 – Digital & Data Compliance

The council has moved to a gov.uk domain for hosting its website which partially meets the requirements of Assertion 10. Arrangements are currently being made by the Clerk to implement a generic gov.uk domain email address for the Clerks use and an IT Policy which will compliment the Data Protection Policy in place.

Conclusions

The Internal Controls within the Parish Council are satisfactory for the size of the Council and there are no concerns or recommendations arising from the Internal Audit.

L Gladders

Internal Auditor, May 2026