

Easton Parish Council

Internal Audit Report

For Easton Parish Council

Financial Year 2019/20

Including Explanatory Notes for Annual Return
(where a 'no' has been marked)

Prepared by Catherine Moore
23rd August 2020

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I have completed an internal audit of the accounts for Easton Parish Council for the year ending 31 March 2020. My findings are detailed below using the tests provided in the Governance and Accountability (England) 2016. The Council commissioned a half year audit from Anne Barnes, so my review has not covered those areas already tested by Mrs Barnes, and covers the period October 2019 to March 2020.

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
Proper bookkeeping	Is the cash book maintained and up to date?	Yes
	Is the cash book arithmetically correct?	Yes
	Is the cash book regularly balanced?	Yes
Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Payment Controls	Has the Council formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations?	Yes – see recommendation from A Barnes audit (outstanding action)
	Date Standing Orders last reviewed	2016
	Date Financial Regulations last reviewed	2016
	Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specific duties?	Yes – Clerk
	Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased?	N/a
	Are payments in the cash book supported by purchase orders, invoices, authorised and minuted?	Yes
	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	Yes
	Is S137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	Yes
	Have S137 payments been approved and included in the minutes as such?	Yes
Risk Management Arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	No
	Do minutes record the Council carrying out an annual risk assessment or review of their risk management scheme?	Yes
	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Not covered – see observation

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	Yes
Budgetary Controls	Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support its precept and has this been minuted as being approved?	Yes
	Has the precept been calculated from the budget and been approved?	Yes
	Does the budget include an actual completed year?	Yes
	Is actual expenditure against budget regularly reported to the Council?	No – see recommendation
	Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	No
Income Controls	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Yes
	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	Yes
	Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	Yes
Petty Cash Procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices / receipts?	N/a
	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting?	N/a
	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	N/a
Payroll Controls	Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions?	Yes – see recommendation
	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council?	Yes
	Are salaries above the National Living Wage / Minimum Wage?	Yes – see recommendation
	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the Council?	Yes

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the Council as an employer?	Yes
Asset Controls	Does the Council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	Yes
	Are the assets and investments registers up to date? When were these last reviewed?	Yes – March 2020
	Does the asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	Not covered – see observation
Bank Reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account and is this reported to Council?	Yes
	Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion?	Yes
	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	No
Year-End Procedures	Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis? (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)	Yes – Receipts and Payments
	Do accounts agree with the cash book?	Yes
	Has a year-end bank reconciliation been undertaken?	Yes
	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	Yes
	Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?	N/a
Procedural	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	No adopted
	Have points raised on the last Internal Audit report been considered by Council and actioned?	Recommend review of report
Transparency: For smaller	Are minutes for the whole year on the website?	N/a

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
councils with turnover under £25,000	Are agendas for the whole year on the website?	N/a
	Are payments over £100 detailed on the website?	N/a
	Have electors' rights been advertised on the website?	N/a
	Are councillors' responsibilities detailed on the website?	N/a
	Is the last financial year's Annual Return on the website?	N/a
	Are the land and building asset details on the website?	N/a
Councils that are Burial Authorities	Are fees levied in accordance with the Council's approved scale of fees and charges?	N/a
	Have fees for the cemetery been reviewed and agreed by the Council?	N/a
	Were comparisons made with other cemeteries prior to setting the fees?	N/a
	Have burial books been kept up to date and are they safely stored?	N/a
Councils with Allotments	Has a list of allotment holders with amounts paid to Council been submitted?	Yes
	Have fees for the allotments been reviewed and agreed by Council?	Yes
Councils with Charities	Have Charities reported and accounted separately?	N/a
	Have Charity accounts been independently audited?	N/a
	Have the Charity accounts and Annual Return been filed within the legal time limit?	N/a
General Data Protection Regulation	Has the Council adopted a Data Protection Policy?	Yes
	Has the Council put in place Privacy Notices?	Yes

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Has Data Protection been built into the general procedures, processes and policies of the Council?	Yes

Summary of Recommendations:

- The budget document should show one completed year and the year to date when being prepared, so that comparisons can be made.
- The litter picker’s contract is missing some key information including the start date, an adequate job title and defined hours of work. The Council currently pays Mrs Cordy for 3.3 hours per week at National Minimum Wage and should ensure that she is not exceeding these hours. Alternatively, a set number of hours and hourly rate linked to National Minimum Wage would give clarity.
- The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations review required was noted in the interim Internal Audit Report in September 2019.

Observations:

- The bank statements for October 2019 were missing so have not been included in this review.
- The insurance schedule was not presented for audit so has not been included in this review. The Council has adequate public and employers liability cover.

The Council should review the Internal Audit Report presented by Mrs Barnes and ensure that all points raised are addressed. I have not duplicated these within this report.

Signed:.....

Date: