

**AUDIT REPORT BY THE INTERNAL AUDITOR
DENT WITH COWGILL PARISH COUNCIL
PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2019 – 31ST MARCH 2020
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020**

Introduction

The Parish Council has a statutory responsibility to provide an adequate and effective Internal Audit by engaging an Internal Auditor ensuring “competency and independence from the Council”. The role of the Internal Auditor is to provide an independent review and appraisal of the Council’s system of internal control.

Responsibilities

Internal Auditor

The Internal Auditor will fulfil the obligations to the council by

- undertaking a review of all internal financial and governance documents in accordance with “Governance & Accountability for Local Councils” Part 2.74
- submitting a report to be presented to Council detailing findings and recommending measures to ensure compliance with the Account & Audit Regulations as amended at the time.
- signing the assurance document in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. (AGAR)

Council

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities requires that a Council **must** make arrangements for the exercise of public rights

- on completion of approving the sections in the AGAR publish, on notice board/s and **on a website**, the relevant documents as specified in regulations for a period of 30 days, one day prior to the statutory period which must include 2nd to 13th July.
- on completion of the External Audit publish, on notice board/s and **on a website**, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and signed External Audit report for a period before 30th September.

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

To ensure the Council can fulfil its statutory obligations the RFO must.

- prepare expediently the Annual Statements of Accounts for the financial year ending 31st March.
- present the accounts and the completed Section 1 and 2 of the AGAR. All of which must bear his/her signature prior to presentation
- ensure The Annual Governance Statement is approved at a full council meeting prior to approving the Accounting Statements, at the same or subsequent meeting.
- ensure all approvals are recorded in the minutes and completed before 30th June in the financial year.

- Confirm at the appropriate times all publication requirements have been publicly displayed.

- Include on the agenda the completion of audit report and any matters arising and subsequent publication completion.

The Council received an unqualified External Audit report confirming that the council had fully complied with the Regulations.

RECOMMENDED that in order to comply with the Account and Audit Regulations the completed AGAR and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit is posted on the Council's website to meet statutory deadlines.

I confirm I have, on the 29th April 2020 undertaken an internal audit for the period 1st April – 2019 - 31st March 2020 in accordance with the Account and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 as outlined in the schedule previously circulated and approved by Council and incorporating any new requirements as outlined in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils" A Practitioners' Guide (England) March 2019

To comply with Government guidance and social distancing regulations during the Covid 19 pandemic the Audit was conducted by examining documents sent by e-mail by the Clerk, information displayed on the Council website. Dentdale.com – and the Clerk providing additional information, for clarification, in response to queries.

1. Proper Bookkeeping

The Council operates Receipts and Payments accounts as required by the Regulations. The Quick Books accounting package records receipts and payments under specific budget headings allowing immediate identification of spending in each budget sector.

All data is backed up to an external hard drive. Additionally records are stored on a Cloud server.

2. Financial Regulations, Standing Orders,

The NALC model documents were used to draft Financial Regulations and Standing Orders tailored to the requirements of the Council. The documents were received, approved and adopted at the meeting held 13th May 2019.

Standing Orders - Minute No 34/19

Financial Regulations – Minute No 35/19

3. Invoice procedure

There is a clear audit trail from the financial records, supported by invoices and all payments are authorised and duly recorded in the minutes. A random check was made of all payments to date above £1000. Confirmation was given that good practice exists to ensure that expenditure is monitored to ensure all are competitively purchased and the Council adheres to the principle of Best Value.

Burton Turf Care	Grass Cutting	£3600.00
Gary Sedgewick	Toilet Refurbishment- Plumbing	£6868.81
Graham Bradley	Toilet Refurbishment	£12875.00
Greenbanks Ltd	Notice Board	£1254.00
J.T. Atkinson	Toilet Refurbishment-Materials	£3362.10
J.T. Atkinson	Toilet Refurbishment-Materials	£4625.4

4. VAT

VAT has been identified on purchases for the period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020, which is verified by the Quick Books system.

5. Sct 137 Payments

The RFO has identified and adhered to the statutory requirement to maintain 'a separate account' of expenditure under Local Government Act 1972 section 137, by the inclusion in the cashbook of a separate accounting column. Expenditure under this Power is recorded at £2607.22, which is within the limit available to the Council.

6. Risk Management

The Risk Register was received, approved and adopted at the meeting held on 13th May 2019. Minute No.30/19 and reviewed and monitored throughout the year.

7.Minutes/Internal Financial Controls

The Minutes clearly documents the activities of the Council and there is no evidence of unusual financial activity. The minutes are numbered and verified as a true record by the signature of the chairman, with date, on the final page.

8. Register of Interest

Members have duly completed the Register of Interests and fulfilled their obligation to keep it updated.

9. Budget Control

A correct budget process is in place and the budget is regularly monitored. Forecasting over-budget spending identifies variances, which are addressed by virements or transfers from cash reserves.

10. Cash Balances

It is the role of the Internal Auditor to express an opinion on the adequacy of retained cash balances. Audit guidance advise a level of three to six months expected expenditure.

The cash balances at the bank of £25452.68 are considered adequate to fulfil the budgeted obligations of the Council.

11. Income Controls

All income is recorded and promptly deposited at the bank.

12. Petty Cash/Clerk's Expenses

The Council does not operate a Petty Cash Account.

All spending under Clerk's Expenses is notified to and approved by Council Sums drawn are allocated to the appropriate budget head.

13. Payroll Controls

All PAYE/NIC records are up to date and submissions to HMRC are made in real time online.

14. Asset Control

The Asset register records all acquisitions and disposals throughout the year (if appropriate) and was received and approved at the meeting held on 13th May 2019 . Minute No. 30/19.

15. Bank Reconciliation

Bank Reconciliations are carried out on receipt of bank statements and accurately portray the financial position of the Council. It is confirmed that there are no unexplained balancing entries. The signature of a member on the respective bank statement confirms verification of the information presented by the RFO.

Conclusion

I confirm that Dent and Cowgill Parish Council is fully compliant with all statutory obligations under the Account and Audit Regulations and the Transparency Code.

In concluding the report I acknowledge the assistance of the Clerk/RFO for his telephone assistance with queries and the thorough preparation and availability of all documents, either by e-mail or on the website, which expedited the audit process as a result of accurate and transparent records.

I wish to extend my best wishes to all Council members and the Clerk who continue, in these difficult circumstances, to represent the community and undertake their respective roles



Georgina D Airey
Internal Auditor – 29th April 2020