

WESTHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Updated March 2024

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (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, i.e. 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, no intended as, undue interference in the RFO’s day to day management of financial affairs.”

As part of its internal control, the Westhall Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE Yes or No	COMMENTS
Ensure an up-to-date Register of Assets	Yes	Last updated March 2024
Regular maintenance arrangements for physical assets	Yes (ongoing)	Inspection of assets to be carried out and report presented to the Council at the July 2024 meeting with updated Assets List.
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance Cover	Yes	Last review September 2023 at renewal.
Annual review of financial risk	Yes	Last Review March 2024
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations	Yes	Discussed and updated at AGM in May and minuted.

Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders	Yes (annually)	Reviewed annually, then discussed and adopted at AGM in May and minuted.
Regular reporting on performance by contractors.	N/A	
Annual review of contracts (where appropriate)	N/A	
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed.	Yes	Submitted and verified by 2 Councillors bi-monthly at Parish Council Meetings and minuted.
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure.	Yes	Financial records and approval of expenditure submitted bi-monthly at Parish Council Meetings and details minuted.
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted.	Yes	Invoices approved and authorised at bi-monthly Parish Council Meetings and minuted.
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked.	Yes	Quarterly check of Accounts Spreadsheet and minuted.
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to District Council notification.	Yes	Payment receipt presented to Parish Council at meeting and shown on bank reconciliation in May.
Contracts of employments for staff	Yes	Annually reviewed and minuted. Ensure compliance with GDPR regulations.
Contract annually reviewed	Yes	Last review and updated November 2023
Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation	Yes	As per LGA regulations received.
PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer	Yes	Operated by SALC Payroll Services. Income Tax approved at bi-monthly meetings and minuted. NIC – Automatic redeclaration of compliance submitted every 3 years.

VAT correctly accounted for. VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook.	Yes	VAT payments identified in Accounts Spreadsheet and claims submitted annually or when balance reaches £100 and minuted. Last claim sent March 2024.
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council	Yes	Bi-monthly by RFO at Parish Council meeting and minuted.
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council	Yes	Budget reviewed by RFO and presented at Parish Council meetings half-yearly to 30 th September and minuted.
Compliance with DCLG Guide Open and Accountable Local Government 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports.	Yes	Available on Parish Council Website.
Compliance with Local Transparency Code of 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £100.	Yes	Public access to Bank Reconciliations and minutes on Noticeboard and Website.
Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation Requirements (GDPR) – Are the following in place:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit/Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices • Procedure for dealing with Subject Access Request • Procedures for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention & Disposal Policies 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	Copies available on the Parish Council website.
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept for safekeeping.	Yes	Pages numbered and hard copy in minute folder. Soft copy on Clerk's Laptop and backed-up memory stick. Ensure compliance with GDPR regulations.
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality	Yes	Online system run by local authority
	Yes	

Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members	Yes	11/07/22 Formerly adopted and minuted. All existing and new councillors receive a copy by email. Copy on Website.
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Yes	Following election or co-option and minuted. Ensure compliance with GDPR regulations.

Date of review of system of Internal Controls 7/3/24

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name M. D. Rogers

Signature M. D. ROGERS

Cllr Margaret Rogers

Report submitted to Council (date) 11th March 2024

(Minute reference): 00324 – *may change if extra meetings occur after 01.02.24*

Next review of system of Internal Control due March 2025

Additional comments by reviewer: