

Internal Audit Report

(To be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Kate Houlihan	Date of report:	13 04 2024
Year ending:	31 March 2024	Date audit conducted:	12 04 2024

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chair of the Council:

I conducted the year end audit remotely via zoom on 12 April 2024, I would like to thank the Clerk Jennie Allwork for her time during the audit and for supplying me with various documents throughout the process.

I reviewed the council's cashbook, which is well maintained and up to date. Balances within the cashbook match to the bank statement and the Accounting Statement within the Annual Governance and Accountability return.

I followed the audit trail for financial transactions in December 2023, in all cases the audit trail was clear. Payments were supported by invoices and approved at council meetings. Appropriate authority was in place to make the payments, and these were matched to bank statements. I also reviewed the cashbook for the full year and there was no unusual activity.

Suitable financial controls are in place and a member of the council verifies invoices and regularly reviews the bank reconciliation and bank statements. All councillors can review invoices and bank statements through SharePoint.

Having reviewed the documentation available to me I would make the following observations which the council should review:

- I noted that the list of councillors on the council website wasn't up to date at the time of the audit. This should be updated, and the council must ensure that each councillor has completed a register of interest form. This must be passed to West Northamptonshire Council. The parish council should either display each register of interest form on their own website or link to the West Northamptonshire Council website where they are also displayed.

[RegisterofInterestsHunsburyMeadowsParishCouncil.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

- Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and a Code of Conduct are all in place. However, these need to be reviewed by the council and updated. For example, the code of conduct on the council's website refers to Northampton Borough Council. The Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NcALC) can assist with model documents.
- I noted that the correct documentation for the 2022-2023 audit was not published within the statutory timescales, so I have had to answer no to assertions M and N. I know that the Clerk began work in September and is being supported by the council with training for the role, which has included training for year-end procedures. So, I am confident that the correct information will be displayed this year.
- The council does not operate a petty cash float, so this area was not covered.

I would like to wish the Clerk well with her role and I am happy to answer any questions the council has in relation to this report or other matters.

Yours sincerely,

K Houlihan

Miss Kate Houlihan
Internal Auditor to the Council

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2020)*. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils and it sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed. The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2023	Year ending 31 March 2024
1. Balances brought forward	23,549	18,889
2. Annual precept	27,000	27,000
3. Total other receipts	5,130	10,045
4. Staff costs	6,946	7,152
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	29,844	28,345
7. Balances carried forward	18,889	20,437
8. Total cash and investments	18,889	20,437
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	45,889	45,850
10. Total borrowings	0	0

