

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council – 2021/2022

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £58,404.45 Expenditure: £52,072.36 Reserves: £7,601.09

AGAR Completion:

Section One: **Yes** – signed (NB comments re Box 5)

Section Two: **Yes** - signed

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/2021: **Yes**

Certificate of Exemption: **No**

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

All were found to be in order. LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts.

The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced.

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Tenders
Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: 27/4/2022 (Ref: 144/21)

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: 27/4/2022 (Ref: 144/21)

VAT reclaimed during the year: **Yes** (1/6/2021)

Registered: **No**

General Power of Competence: **No**

There was no evidence of tenders during the year that exceeded the £25,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold.

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Suffolk, IP13 0PP

Tel: 07732 681125

Email: heather@heelis.eu

Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy FILCM

Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council
Compliance with Data Protection regulations

Risk Assessment document in place: Yes

Data Protection registration: Yes

Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulations have changed and the new Regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. It is likely that this will affect the way in which the Council handles its data. Due to the financial risk associated with the General Data Protection Regulations, the Council have carried out a separate risk assessment specifically covering GDPR.

Privacy Policy published: Yes

Insurance was in place for the year of audit and was reviewed at a meeting held on 27/10/2021 (Ref: 81/21). There was no evidence in the minutes that the annual review of the Risk Assessment, including Internal Controls had been carried out during the year of audit. It is noted that it is scheduled for the next meeting.

Recommendation: *To ensure the annual review of the Risk Assessment and Internal Controls is carried out during the year of audit. The Council should amend the AGAR Section 1, Box 5 to read 'No'.*

The Council have good internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Bank signatories were confirmed for 2021/2022 on 26/5/2021 (Ref: 11/21.iv).

Fidelity Cover: £150,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Transparency

Under the **Transparency code for smaller authorities**, smaller councils with income/expenditure under £25,000 should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

Smaller Council: No

Website: www.e-voice.org.uk/bgnb-parishcouncil

The Council is not subject to the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller Councils. The Transparency Code for Councils with a turnover exceeding £200,000 is not covered as part of the Internal Audit.

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15(15)** councils must publish on their website:

External audit report

2021 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes

2021 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes

2021 Annual Return, Section Three Published – Yes

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations** councils must publish on their website:

Notice of period for the exercise of public rights

Published – Yes

Period of Exercise of Public Rights

Start Date *25/6/2021*

End Date *5/8/2021*

Budgetary controls supporting documents

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and

Precept: £17,827.43 (2021-2022)

Date: 25/11/2020 (Ref: 74/20.ii)

Precept: £19,073.19 (2022-2023)

Date: 24/11/2021 (Ref: 94/21 (ii))

Effective budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Petty Cash

Associated books and established system in place

A satisfactory petty cash system is in place with supporting paperwork. A sample of receipts were examined and cross referenced with vouchers and the cash book.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.

Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures

Records relating to contracts of employment

PAYE System in place: **Yes**

Employer's Reference: **083/HA50440**

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Suffolk, IP13 0PP

Tel: 07732 681125

Email: heather@heelis.eu

Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy FILCM

Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

P60s issued: Yes

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Supporting paperwork is in place and a P60 has been produced as part of the year end process.

It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 27/4/2022 (Ref: 144/21.v), where they confirmed the NJC pay award.

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at cost value/insurance value. The total value of assets are recorded at £96,245. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.

Bank Reconciliation

Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Bank Balances at 31 March were confirmed as:

Barclays Community xxxx4137 £7,106.09

Reserves

General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council's general reserves are a little on the low side. It is suggested that this needs to be monitored and increased to between 50-100% of the precept or 6 months running costs.

Year-end procedures

Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End of year accounts are prepared on an Income & Expenditure basis. Creditors and Debtors are identified within the year end accounts.

Sole Trustee

The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

The 2021 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 30/6/2021 (Ref: 26/21.ii).

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 23/2/2022 (Ref: 120/21.iv).

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2021 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 28/4/2021 (Ref: 126/20).

The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 29/9/2021 (Ref: 67/21.ii).

There were no matters of significance arising from the External Audit.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 26/5/2021. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for her assistance during the course of the audit work



Heather Heelis
Heelis & Lodge
19 May 2022

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Suffolk, IP13 0PP
Tel: 07732 681125
Email: heather@heelis.eu
Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy FILCM
Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy