

# HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

## **Internal Audit Report for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council – 2020/2021**

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

Income: £55,308.47 Expenditure: £39,049.89 Reserves: £16,258.32

### AGAR Completion:

Section One: **Yes**

Section Two: **Yes**

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. VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts. There was no LGAs 137 expenditure in the year of audit.*

*The cash book 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: **29/4/2020**

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **27/5/2020 (Ref: 137/19)**

VAT reclaimed during the year: **Yes (1/4/2019 – 31/3/2021) £5,841.11**

Registered: **No**

General Power of Competence: **No**

*There were no tenders during the year that exceeded the £25,000 Public Contract Regulation threshold.*

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## 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 (Ref: ZA447524)

### **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 28/10/2020 (Ref: 62/20.iii). Internal Controls were reviewed at a meeting held on 29/4/2020 (Ref: 138/19).*

*Banks signatories were reviewed at a meeting held on 26/8/2020 (Ref: 36/20.iii).*

*The Council have effective internal financial controls in place. Cheque stubbs are initialled by signatories. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.*

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](http://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:

*2020 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes  
2020 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes  
2020 Annual Return, Section Three Published – Yes*

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15(2b)** 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 **4/8/2020** End Date **16/9/2020**

*The Council have met the 2020 AGAR publication requirements.*

### **Budgetary controls**

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and supporting documents

Precept: £17,827.43 (2021-2022) Date: 25/11/2020 (Ref: 74/20.ii)  
Precept: £16,750.19 (2020-2021) Date: 11/12/2019 (Ref: 98/19)

*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.*

### **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 PAYE Reference: **083/HA50440**

*The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. All 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 27/5/2020 (Ref: 14/20).*

### **Asset control**

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets

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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 £94,054. 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      £16,689.75*

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

*The Council have adequate general reserves in their year end accounts.*

**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 a Receipts & Payments basis.*

**Sole Trustee** The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

*The Council is not a sole trustee.*

**Internal Audit Procedures**

*The 2020 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 29/7/2020 (Ref: 23/20.ii).*

*A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on*

*Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 22/5/2021 (Ref: 11/21.iii).*

**External Audit**

*The Council formally approved the AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 27/5/2020 (Ref: 9/20.ii).*

*The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 27/1/2021.*

*There were no matters arising from the External Audit.*

### **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

- Due to the Coronavirus pandemic the requirement to hold the Annual Parish Council meeting was removed until May 2021.
- 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 and a well presented set of audit documents.



**Heather Heelis**  
**Heelis & Lodge**  
1 June 2021

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