

GOSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26

A Proper Bookkeeping

- Is the cash book maintained and up to date?
Yes. Cash book is updated monthly using Scribe.
- Is the cash book arithmetic correct?
Computerised accounting system (Scribe package)
- Is the cash book regularly balanced?
Computerised accounting system

B Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Payment Controls

- Has the council formally adopted standing orders, financial regulations and a publication scheme?
Yes. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were re-adopted at meeting on 19 May 2025 (minute 25/078). New model SO were adopted 19 January 2026 (minute 26/010). Adoption of the new model financial regulations have been discussed throughout the year and deferred and will be approved in June 2026. Publications Scheme was adopted at the meeting 16 March 2026 (minute 26/055).
- Has the council adopted other policies and procedures?
Adopted Policies and key documents are on the website. [Council Documents/Policies - Gosfield Parish Council \(e-voice.org.uk\)](https://www.gosfieldparishcouncil.org.uk/e-voice)
- Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specified duties?
Yes. Richard Edwards was appointed as RFO at the meeting on 19 May 2025 (minute 25/082).
- Have items or services been purchased in accordance with Financial Regs?
Regulation 4.1 allows payments by the clerk of up to £1500 together with the chair and 4.5 allows payments of up to £500 by the clerk in cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services. Regulation 11.1h can be summarised as - 3 estimates are required for amounts £100 to £3000; 3 quotes for amounts £3000 to £25,000; tender process for contracts over £25,000. [The tender threshold agreed with that in standing orders until adoption of the new model in January 2026: SO 18 av has a tender threshold of £60,000 \(inc VAT\). When the new model FR are approved the thresholds will be aligned.](#) There was one contract of over £25k ex VAT in the year being for a skate ramp using s106 funding total £55000, of which £52250 was paid (retainer of £2750 ex VAT withheld). Payments to Four One Four totalling £66000 inc VAT were: £9240 on 29/09/25, £6754.10 on 31/10/25 and £6600 on 11/11/25 with £40105.90 paid direct by BDC (and £3300 inc VAT withheld). Initial enquiries suggested that the £55000 available would not be sufficient to build a skate ramp. Council approached several companies to ask what could be provided for the £55k available, with a view to drafting a spec, but were told a minimum of £70k would be needed. Four One Four was the only company interested so the council initiated a co-design process. The preferred design and cost of £55000 ex VAT was agreed at the meeting 18 August 2025 (minute 25/170). At the time of the decision, the council threshold for a tender process was £25,000 (ex VAT). Council knew the works would cost more than £25k but from initial approaches to potential tenderers, were confident that submissions would not be forthcoming and that the price of the agreed works could not be matched. [In making this decision, council should have minuted the use of FR 11.1d \(when applications are made to waive financial](#)

regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council') and explained the reason.

There were no other payments in 2025/26 of over £3000 that would require 3 fixed price quotes. During the year, budgets, estimates and quotes for below £3000 were agreed for a variety of purchases including benches (25/098, 26/034), rat treatment (25/140.4), allotment water supply (25/163), tree works (25/188), pavilion works (25/208, 25/234), nature reserve works (25/255), bins (25/26013.3), payroll services (25/135.2, 26/050).

There will be 2 contracts of over £25000 in 2026/27, agreed this year. At the meeting on 15 Dec 2025 3 quotes were reviewed for the car park works (2 new quotes plus one from Nov 2024 minute 24/249.8) and council agreed to award a contract totalling £31750 (minute 25/259). At the meeting on 16 February 2026 council awarded the contract for drainage at the playing field (minute 26/036) to the same contractor. This contract is an extension of the car park contract so no other quotes were sought under FR11.1aii.

- Are payments in the cash book supported by invoices, authorised and minuted?

There is a Finance item in each month's minutes where a list of payments is approved. The list for approval is attached as an appendix to the minutes. Invoices are validated on receipt by the chair and placed into the monthly folder. The weekend prior to the meeting, the chair enters the invoices onto the scribe system which creates a 'Payments awaiting authorisation list' attributing a number to each payment. The 'cheque' numbers are written on the source documents. The list and source documents are reviewed by the RFO who checks the VAT entries and account codes (and notes the source of income covering the payment). The pack is scanned and emailed to councillors the day before the meeting. Three hard copy packs are taken to the meeting for councillors without email. At the meeting the payments are approved the hardcopy of the list is signed by the chair, the RFO and a councillor in accordance with FR5.2. In some months there are initials on the source documents as evidence of scrutiny. After approval at the meeting the chair sets up the payment on Barclays system and a second councillor, usually the vice chair, authorises release of the funds.

- Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?
VAT on payments is shown in a separate column on the Listing of Payments by Code / cost centre report in Scribe. VAT refunds (account code 140) total is £16397.03 for the period 01/01/25 to 31/12/25 (including £3298.82 for the period Jan to Mar 2025). It includes VAT recovery of £11000 on the £55k + VAT skate park invoice, although the £3300 retainer (£2750 + £550 VAT) has not yet been paid to the contractor. VAT on 2025/26 payments totals £13648.12, including Jan to Mar 2026 of £1099.91. If Jan to Mar 2026 is recovered in full, care must be taken not to claim the £550 VAT on the retainer when it is paid later in 2026.
- Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?
General Power of Competence was confirmed at the meeting on 19 May 2025 (minute 25/075).

C Risk Management

- Does a scan of the minutes identify any unusual activity?
VE Day event (25/062, 25/092.12), Acquiring parcels of land: Meadway development 25/226, 26/013), car park project (25/182, 25/259), skate park

project (25/203), 5-year plan and management agreement at nature reserve (25/231), 2 vacancies (25/244), drainage project at playing field (26/036).

- Do the minutes record the council carrying out a risk assessment?
Yes. A strategic risk assessment was adopted at the meeting 19 May 2025 (minute 25/078). A suite of other risk assessments was approved at the same meeting for play area and playing field, footpaths and public benches (which overlap a little), cleaning the ha-ha ditch, litter picking and cleaning the pavilion toilet area, H&S at work (assessments and guidance for activities undertaken by staff and council volunteers), COSHH and a fire risk assessment for the pavilion and public toilet (public buildings).
- Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?
Yes. Policy with Ansvar renewed 1 October 2025 (minute 25/076) is the first year of a 3-year undertaking to 30/09/28. Cover for public and products liability, employers' liability, trustee and director indemnity, personal accident, fidelity guarantee, reputational risk, legal expenses, property damage and all risks insurance.
- Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?
Payment of invoices – All councillors receive the payments list and source documents. For most months the list is signed and the source documents are marked with initials as evidence of scrutiny. *These marks are good evidence of internal control and I would recommend a more consistent application.*
Bank mandate and authority – Bank signatories were agreed at the meeting on 19 May 2025 (minute 25/074) and updated 15 Sep 2025 (minute 25/180.1). There are 3 councillors as signatories plus the clerk. The clerk does not set up payments: only uses access to view the accounts.
Review of bank recs and evidence of scrutiny against the bank statements – Bank reconciliations are prepared each month by the RFO and checked by the chair: quarterly reconciliations are minuted as approved at council meetings (minutes 25/061, 25/135, 25/201, 26/008) but are not signed. *The bank statements and bank reconciliations are required to be signed quarterly by Financial Regulation 2.2.*
Monitoring of actual v budget – The Scribe system prepares actual v budget reports which are reviewed as part of the precept setting. The RFO also prepares ad hoc reports of interest to councillors on fundraising events and expenditure from grants.
Internal controls over salary payments – Payroll is outsourced adding a layer of internal control to pay calculations
Cash handling – Small amounts of cash are handled: £275 for VE event ticket sales and £18 for sale of maps, collected by the shop and handed to the chair for banking at the post office.
Collection of all funds due to the council – Allotment rents: The 19 plot holders are invoiced in September. A separate spreadsheet records the plot number, plot size, name and rent due (based on plot size price per square metre) plus a contribution towards hedge cutting. The amount and date paid are recorded and o/s amounts chased. At the year-end the spreadsheet total is reconciled to the Scribe account total.
Grapevine invoices: Regular advertisers are invoiced in April for the whole year. New advertisers are invoiced to 31 March 2026. There is a separate spreadsheet to record invoices issued to advertisers and to monitor receipts. The Scribe accounts total includes £2220.99 settled invoices from the 2025/26

spreadsheet and £4889 from the 2026/27 spreadsheet (issued end of March 2026 and paid promptly).

Project management and Safeguarding assets – A standing item on the agenda for matters arising is used as a project tracker to follow up on actions raised in previous minutes with meeting references. Annual ROSPA report is undertaken and works actioned (25/141) and inspection of skate ramp after installation (25/203). BDC undertake weekly play equipment inspections (minute 25/081). A councillor is appointed to inspect benches: the monthly checklists are handed to the clerk at each meeting. Minutes show that council assets are managed / inspected, issues reported and works completed: Allotments (25/109 high water bill, 25/181.13 leak repair, 25/140 allotment holder meeting), nature reserve (matters arising each month, 25/231, 25/255) Trees (25/140, 25/187), noting potential Open Space improvements (25/254).

- Are all risks identified and actions undertaken to mitigate risks?
The strategic risk register has columns for risk level, description of the identified risk, and management of risk and actions taken. The assessment is comprehensive in scope. The council has agreements in place with organisations that use its assets. The Playing Field Management Committee uses part of the pavilion building and playing field land with some specific exclusions. The Community Shop uses another part of the pavilion building that the council insures. The council insures the pavilion building and seeks assurances from both organisations that fire safety measures are in place (the council paid for the fire extinguisher annual service in June 2025).

D Budgetary Controls

- Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?
There were detailed discussions at the Finance Working Group meeting. At the meeting on 15 December 2025 the council agreed and a budget and precept of £53565 (minute 25/248).
- Is actual expenditure against the budget reported to the council?
A summary of Actual Income and Expenditure from the excel spreadsheets was used at the finance working group meeting as a basis for precept deliberations (figures taken from the Scribe reports and presented in a format familiar to councillors with columns for 2025/26 budget, actual to 30/11/25, expected outturn, draft for 2026/27 and explanatory notes in the right-hand column). The budget includes amounts to build reserves for the car park project, play area and Nature Reserve. Expenditure from grants is monitored to enable reporting to the funders.
- Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?
Underspends on village maintenance and the nature reserve resulted in an increase in reserves. At the year-end £56679 of the total reserves of £92288 are earmarked. This is a mix of EMR for council contingencies (election, locum, legal fees), and funds for council projects or sinking funds (pavilion, Streetlight replacement, Nature reserve, trees, play area, car park, skate park final payment).

E Income Controls

- Does the council have sources of income other than precept and VAT?
BDC Street Scene, Grass cutting contracts (Eastlight & ECC), Grapevine advertising, Allotment plot fees, contributions towards pavilion water bills, s106 funds, grants, donations, VE day event income, sale of maps, and interest.

- Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?
Almost all income is received by direct credit. Small amounts of cash have been received for VE Day event and sales of maps which are banked as soon as practical.
- Does the precept recorded in the cash book agree to the district council's notification?
Yes. Precept total £50090 received as £25045 in April and September 2025.
- Are security controls over cash adequate and effective?
Amounts are minimal and held securely until banked.

F Petty Cash No Petty cash is held.

G Payroll Controls

- Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?
Yes. The clerk works 13 hours per week on SCP17. The council also employs a cleaner and a litter picker on minimum wage, and they are paid for the hours worked. NJC pay awards and back pay for 2025/26 were noted at the meeting on 15 September 2025 (minute 25/180.2) and paid in September salary. The backpay is calculated before sending to the payroll provider: calculations are on file. AGAR box 4 is the sum of Scribe account codes 210 (staff net pay) and 250 (PAYE & NI). Code 260 (Pension) is zero.
- Are other payments to the clerk reasonable and approved by the council?
Yes. The clerk, cleaner and litter picker can claim reimbursement for items such as ink, paper, stamps, envelopes, cleaning materials etc which is paid separately from salary.
- Has PAYE / NIC and pensions been properly operated by the council as an employer?
Payroll is operated by an external payroll provider, Richard Edwards Group. The chair sends an email to confirm the hours worked and gross pay each month. Clerk has opted out of the pension scheme and other staff have not opted in.
- What controls exist over management of staff time and duties?
Clerk appraisal was undertaken by the Personnel committee on 8 July 2025 (minute 25/125) and the cleaner and litter picker appraisals noted at the same meeting (25/124). The clerk supervises the cleaner and litter picker. All staff keep time sheets which go to the chair. Throughout the year clerk has regular 1:1s with the chair. Peaks and troughs in workload are mostly managed within the weekly hours.

H Asset Control

- Does the council keep an asset register of all material assets owned?
Yes. The Register is kept as an excel file. It is an accumulation of asset acquisitions since 31 March 2011 and over the years the costs have been replaced with insurance values at different times. During the year the assets have been added to the Scribe asset register but it is still a work in progress.
- Is the register regularly updated?
Asset register is updated at the year-end to pick up all the capital expenditure in the year. Opening balance £585208.54. PKF required the opening balance to be restated to £605208.54 to include the C&C 2-year bond that did not mature until September 2025 (minute 250/180). Additions £57718.50 (bait stations £630, skate ramp £55000, Dog bin £304.97, bench £436.42, beacon

£500, Picnic bench £686.94, waste bin £160.17). Disposals £20000 (maturity of the 2-year investment in C&C). Closing balance £642927.04.

- Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?
Property Damage for Municipal Infrastructure is £450991 (total cover for street furniture, play equipment, war memorials, gates and fences etc), the Pavilion building £773127, and the Tractor Shed £25772. There are no insurance values on the asset register. In chair confirms a total loss valuation for the pavilion has been calculated and the insurance cover of £773127 is sufficient. Without insurance reinstatement costs alongside each of the asset items in the register, I am not in a position to make an assessment about adequacy of cover.

I Bank Reconciliation

- Is there a bank rec for each account?
Yes. One reconciliation covers the 4 bank accounts (Barclays current account, Barclays deposit account, Cambridge & Counties 1-year fixed bond and C&C 95-day notice account).
- Is the bank rec carried out regularly on receipt of statements?
Yes. Every month as soon as the statements arrive.
- Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? *No.*

J Year End Procedures

- Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (R & P / I & E)? *Yes. R & P basis*
- Do accounts agree with the cash book and working papers?
Yes. All cross check
- Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?
Yes. Source documents are numbered to correspond to entries on the Invoice Control spreadsheet
- Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?
Not required for R&P.

K Council Exempting itself from a limited assurance review

- Did the council meet the criteria?
No. Gross income and gross expenditure in 2024/25 exceeded £25000.
- Did the council exempt itself from the review? *N/A*
- Was the exemption certified at a meeting? *N/A*
- Was the appropriate notice displayed? *N/A*

L Web page Publication

The authority publishes information on a website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Policies and minutes are on the website. Payments appended to the minutes.

M Public Rights in Summer 2025

The council agreed the dates for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights commencing 24 June 2025 and ending 4 August 2025 and displayed the notice [public-rights-2024-2025-2](#)

N Publication of Annual Return 2024/25

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).

[Audit 2024-2025 - Gosfield Parish Council](#)

O Digital and Data Compliance

- Does the council have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain? *Yes*
- Does the council website meet [web content accessibility](#) guidelines? *Yes. The council's website provider (E-voice) states that the website is conformant with WCAG 2.2 level AA. [The website accessibility-statement-2 will need to be updated.](#)*
- Has the council registered with ICO as a data controller/processor, appointed a data manager and have appropriate policies in place? *The council has ICO registration. It is assumed that the clerk is the data manager but documents refer to contacting 'the council' I recommend including the clerk email address on the Privacy Notice where it refers to 'contact the council'. The new IT policy names the clerk as primary administrator. The council has in place a Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy and Social Media Policy.*
- Has the council formally adopted an IT policy setting out how everyone – conducts council business in a secure and legal way? *An IT Policy will be adopted on 22 June 2026 (26/122.3).*

P Trustees

- If the council is a trustee, has it met its responsibilities? *Not applicable. Gosfield PC is not a sole trustee.*

Jan Stobart, FCCA
4 June 2026