

INTERNAL AUDIT FOR BLOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL.

Report by Mrs Irena Litton BEM

Dated 18th March 2025, 31st March & 2nd April 2025

	Comments and Recommendations
1. Accounting records	<p>Adequately kept on a payments and receipts system.</p> <p>Cashbook is regularly maintained via Scribe accounting.</p>
2. Payments, Receipts & Budget	<p>A budget for Financial Year 2024/2025 was prepared and minuted. Min Ref 7.5 November 2023.</p> <p>A copy of the budget is published on the Councils website.</p> <p>Payments are recorded in the Minutes.</p> <p>Receipts are recorded in the Minutes.</p> <p>Recommend: that a description is included as part of the report for transactions, to comply with being open and transparent.</p> <p>Spending and Quotes are duly considered in line with the Councils Financial Regulations.</p>
3. Budget vs spend.	<p>The budget vs spend was reviewed in the meeting held on 16th May 2024, Min Ref 12.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2024 record an update on Budget Planning, Min Ref 7.6</p>
4. Bank reconciliations	<p>Bank reconciliations are regularly recorded in the minutes and are verified as part of the internal controls.</p>
5. Investments and Petty Cash	<p>Min Ref 6.12 19th September 2024 recorded transfer of £28K to Deposit Account.</p> <p>The Council does not hold Petty Cash.</p>
6. Reserves	<p>General Reserves are reasonable circa 6 – 9 months of budgeted expenditure.</p>

	<p>Ear Marked Reserves total £90,000</p> <p>The Reserves were considered as part of the budget setting process. 21st November 2024, Min Ref 7.4</p>
7. Precept	<p>For FY 2024/25 was recorded in the November 23 minutes, Min Ref 7.6.</p> <p>Precept demand for £118,965.</p>
8. Asset Register	<p>The Fixed Asset Register was reviewed 9th May 2024. Min Ref: 4.1.</p> <p>Recommend: the updated copy of the Fixed Asset Register is published on the Council's website</p>
9. Insurance	<p>Insurance is with Hiscox Insurance.</p> <p>The quote for insurance was approved 9th May 2024, Min Ref 4.2.</p> <p>Recommend: that the Council reviews its requirements to ensure that the cover is adequate and this is recorded in the minutes.</p>
10. Risk Assessment Policy	<p>The Risk Management Policy was adopted 9th May 24, Min Ref 5.1.</p> <p>A copy is published on the Councils Website.</p>
11. Assets Maintained	<p>Reporting of asset maintenance is recorded in the minutes. Examples include Playground equipment, the bus shelters, phone box and bins.</p> <p>The Risk Assessment Policy states assets are inspected but this is weak and could be improved.</p> <p>Action: The Council should ensure it has a robust schedule of inspections and maintenance and that updates are clearly recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>Burial Reporting is clearly recorded in the minutes.</p>
12. Financial Regulations	<p>The Financial Regulations were reviewed in April 2024, Min Ref: 7.1.</p> <p>A copy of the Financial Regulations are published on the Councils website.</p>

	<p>Note - NALC have issued a new set of Model Financial Regulations, which have also been recently updated to reflect the new Procurement Act.</p> <p>Recommend: The newest version of NALC Model Financial Regulations are adapted and adopted.</p>
13. Standing Orders	<p>Most recent NALC version were last reviewed in July 2023..</p> <p>A copy of the Standing Orders are published on the Councils website.</p> <p>Recommend: The Council review the Standing Orders.</p>
14. Powers to Spend	<p>The Council doesn't have the General Power of Competence, however it has used appropriate powers for expenditure.</p>
15. S.137 spending & Grants	<p>Expenditure was within the limits (£10.81 per electorate, for Financial Year 2024/2025).</p> <p>The Council have adopted a Grants Awarding Policy in which they are currently reviewing (20th February 2025, Min Ref: 5.6)</p> <p>21st November 2024 Min Ref: 7.3 details grants awarded up to this point.</p> <p>Recommend: The Council publishes a report detailing all the grants awarded as part of the year process.</p>
16. VAT	<p>VAT of £3,220.43 claimed in November 2024.</p> <p>Clearly recorded in the November minutes. Min Ref: 14</p>
17. Borrowing	<p>There are no Loan arrangements.</p>
18. Internal Control	<p>A copy of the Financial Reporting including bank reconciliations is shared with the Members each month.</p> <p>Oct - Dec 2024 Report, signed off by Cllr Turner, 4th February 2025, viewed.</p>

19. Direct Debits/Regular Payment List	<p>The Council approved a list of direct debit payments in the 16th May 2024 meeting, Min Ref 11.7.</p> <p>Bank Standing Orders were reviewed 20th June 2024, Min Ref: 6.5.</p>
20. Bank Signatories	The Council reviewed the bank mandate in 16 th May 2024, Min Ref 11.4.
21. Employment	<p>Council is registered with HMRC.</p> <p>The Council has contracts for all its staff.</p> <p>External Payroll provider used.</p> <p>Clerks hours and Salary were reviewed, 19th September 2024, Min Ref: 6.5,6.6 &6.7.</p> <p>NALC pay award was approved 21st November 2024, Min Ref: 11.4</p> <p>New Admin Assistant recruited 4th December 2024, NALC Model Contract in place.</p>
22. Pension	<p>A Nest Pension is in place for the Clerk.</p> <p>Auto Enrolment declaration completed May 2025. (Next due May 2028)</p> <p>No Pension provision for the Admin Assistant.</p>
23. Councillor Allowances/Expenses	<p>The Councillors are not paid an allowance.</p> <p>Expenses are recorded in the minutes, but could be improved by providing a description of what the expenses refer to.</p> <p>Recommend: as per Section 2, the list of payments show a clear description.</p>
24. End of Year Accounts	<p>The End of Year 'position' was approved 16th May 2024, Min Ref: 11.3.</p> <p>Action: The Council should publish the End of Year Accounts, for example a Balance Sheet report. (Scribe Accounting produces this report). The Council should clearly approved the End of Years Accounts.</p>

<p>25. AGAR Section 1 Governance Statement</p>	<p>Approved 20th June 2024, Min Ref: 6.3.</p> <p>Action: The Council MUST approve the Annual Governance Statement before approving the Annual Accounting Statement.</p> <p>For Example, The Agenda should read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the Financial Year ---- b. To approve the Annual Accounting Statement for Financial Year --- <p>A copy of the AGAR Governance Statement is published on the Councils website.</p>
<p>26. AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statement</p>	<p>Approved 20th June 2024 – see notes in section 25.</p> <p>Copy is published on the Councils website.</p>
<p>27. a. Internal Audit Report / AGAR</p> <p>b. Internal Audit Report – reviewed and actions taken.</p> <p>c. Appointment of Internal Auditor for Financial Year ending 31st March 2025</p>	<p>a. Internal Audit AGAR and report noted in 18th April 2024, Min Ref: 6.5</p> <p>Action: The Council MUST publish a copy of the Internal Auditor AGAR on the Councils website</p> <p>b. It is noted that recommendations have been acted upon, however, the minutes should clearly minute that the report has been reviewed.</p> <p>Recommend: That the Council review the Internal Auditors report and minute the review and actions carried out.</p> <p>c. Council approved the appointment of the Internal Auditor in the 16th January 2025 meeting, Min Ref: 6.3.</p> <p>Action: The Council should minute that the Internal Auditor is competent and independent of the Council.</p>
<p>28. External Audit Report / AGAR OR Certificate of Exemption.</p>	<p>The External Auditor Report was noted in 19th September 2024 minutes. There was an action to be carried out – see Section 29.</p> <p>Action: The External Auditor AGAR should have its own Agenda Item. For Example 'To receive confirmation of the External Auditor AGAR Report</p>

	<p>and Notice of Conclusion for Financial Year Ending ---'</p> <p>A copy is published on the Councils website along with a copy of the Notice of Conclusion.</p>
29. Exercise in Public Rights	<p>The Council did NOT comply with the Notice of Exercise in Public Rights. Refer to the External Auditors AGAR report.</p> <p>Dates were reported 18th June – 29th July 2024.</p> <p>The Publication Date was prior to the date of the AGAR being approved..</p> <p>The Council must now tick 'No' Section 4 on the AGAR Governance Statement.</p> <p>Recommend: that the Council ensure the correct criteria is used and that the full dates for publication are recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>A copy of the notice is published on the Councils website.</p>
30. Model Publication Scheme.	<p>Action: A copy of the Councils Model Publication Scheme should be available on the Councils website.</p> <p>The Council should ensure that all documents that relate to the Model Publication Scheme are also published on the Councils website.</p>
31. Policies & Data Security.	<p>The following Policies regarding Data Protection are published on the Councils website:</p> <p>Data Protection and GDPR Policy were reviewed in the 18th April 2024 meeting, Min Ref: 7.2.</p> <p>Council has registered with the ICO.</p>
32. Accessibility Statement	<p>The website partially complies with the 2018 Accessibility Regulations.</p>
33. Agendas and Summons	<p>Agendas are issued and published within regulations.</p> <p>Agendas clearly show the appropriate summons.</p>

<p>34. Code of Conduct, DPIs , Members responsibilities and Minutes</p>	<p>Code of Conduct was reviewed 18th April 2024 meeting, Min Ref: 7.1.</p> <p>Minutes clearly record DPIs</p> <p>Members Register of Interests are published on Cotswold District Council website but can be accessed by a link from the Parish Councils website.</p> <p>Members responsibilities are published on the Councils website.</p> <p>Minutes are published in draft form on Councils website within 28 days.</p> <p>Minutes are duly signed as a true record.</p>
<p>35. Other Observations.</p>	<p>a. Council should considering changing domain to '.gov', as per JPAG 2025.</p> <p>b. The Council is a burial authority.</p> <p>c. The Council is not responsible for Managing Trusts.</p>

Sampling carried out on the 31st March 2025

Description	Payer	Date	Amount
CIL (receipt)	Cotswold District Council	11 th April 2024	£769.41
VAT Refund (receipt)	HMRC	1 st November 2024	£3,220.43
Burial Plot No 312 Upper Cemetery	Information provided to IA.	20 th August 2024	£1,050.00
Subscription (payment)	GAPTC	27 th March 2025	£638.23
Salary (Payment) For Admin Assistant	Details checked- Error already by identified The Clerk and being rectified with	Month 12 – March payslip. Over payment to be deducted from the April payment.	

	external payroll provided.		
Grant (Payment)	Sue Salmon – Warm Space/Soups initiative.	21 st March 2025	£120.00
IT provision (Payment)	Cloudy IT	5 th March 2025	£177.02 (Vat £29.50)

Additional Documents viewed:

- Admin Assistant, Contract 4th December 2024
- Insurance Schedule with Hiscox.
- January 2025 signed minutes viewed, last page is signed. **Recommend** that the other pages are also initialled.
- Cashbook viewed (separate column for S.137 payments)
- Bank Statements and copy invoices viewed.
- Copy of Internal Checkers Report viewed.
- Copy of Reserves Spreadsheet viewed.
- Burial documentation and payment details viewed.