

PALGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Palgrave Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its December or January meeting. The January meeting of the council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

A Councillor is appointed at each meeting on a rotation basis to have responsibility for bank reconciliation checks.

The full council meets monthly (except August), each year and regularly monitors progress against the budget at meetings by receiving relevant reports from the parish clerk.

The council carries out an annual review of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See attached table.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the council for approval. Two members of the council must sign every cheque or monthly schedule of payments. The signatories should consider each payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories or internet banking users are members of the Council. Where delegation permits, as per s.101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Council's Financial Regulations, a report will be provided to the next full Council.

Income:

All income is received and banked in the council's name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The council reviews its risk assessment annually and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The council appoints an independent and competent internal auditor who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of it's:

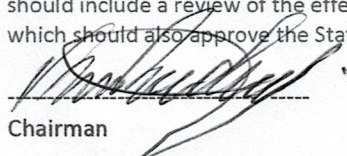
• Records	• Procedures	• Systems
• Internal control	• Regulations	• Risk management

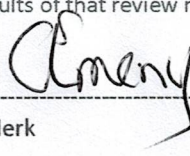
External Audit:

The council's external auditors, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.


Chairman


RFO/Clerk

Reviewed by Palgrave Parish Council at Meeting date: 14 March 2024

PALGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT 2023-2024

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit. Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control:

'The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control.... care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.'

As part of its internal control, the Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on an bi-annual basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE	COMMENTS – check documents & initial
	Yes or No	
Ensuring an up-to-date Register of Assets	Yes	Reviewed bi-annually with final update March '24 for y/ending 31.3.24 14/3/24
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets	Yes	Inspected annually 14/3/24
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover	Yes	Assets insured as per Asset Schedule which is reviewed annually Annual
Annual review of financial risk	Yes	Reviewed annually & signed by Chair 14/3/24
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations	Yes	Reviewed annually and updated before 31 March 14/3/24
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders	Yes	Reviewed and approved annually in March each year before year end. 14/3/24
Regular reporting on performance by contractors	Yes	Clerk reports back regularly at meetings exte 3 Year Contract
Annual review of contracts (if appropriate)	Yes	Three-year contracts agreed and reviewed
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed	Yes	Checked by a different Councillor each month Monthly different coun
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes	All approved at Monthly PC Meeting & minuted Minute who Yes - signed
Recording in the accounts the minutes reference and the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved	Yes	Recorded monthly in the accounts spreadsheet comes under Clerk
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted	Yes	Recorded in the minutes each month monthly
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked	Yes	Checked monthly against the bank statement Monthly received
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to BMSDC notification	Yes	Checked against the bank statement YES
Contracts of employment in place for staff	Yes	Reviewed annually at Personnel meeting Clerk uses HMRC Basic PAYE tools program
Contract annually reviewed	Yes	
Records updated to reflect relevant legislation	Yes	
PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer	Yes	

VAT payments identified, recorded and re-claimed in the accounts	Yes	Reclaimed at least annually or more dependent on time and value of reclaim March 24
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council	Yes	Accounts spreadsheet sent to all monthly YES
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council	Yes	Actuals v Budget included in the monthly accounts sent to all Councillors Yes
Compliance with DCLG Guide <i>Open & Accountable Local Government 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports</i>	Yes	we do comply (Yes)
Compliance with Local Transparency Code 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £500	Yes	All items of expenditure are listed in the monthly minutes Yes
Compliance with Data Protection Legislation – Council registered as a Data Controller	Yes	Paid annually by direct debit and renewed £35.00 DD (Yes)
Compliance with General Data Protection Regulations:	Yes	Since Brexit, UK GDPR used
• Privacy Notices	Yes	Regularly reviewed (Yes)
• Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests	Yes	
• Procedure for dealing with Data breaches	Yes	
• Data Retention & Disposal Policies	Yes	
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept for safe-keeping	Yes	Yes
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality	Yes	Yes. Complies
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members	Yes	The new code was adopted and minuted in 2022. Code of Conduct minuted each month. (Yes)
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Yes	Records kept by the Clerk Yes

Date of review of system of Internal Controls: **for March 2024**

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name: Marion Sneddon

Signature: **M Sneddon**

Report submitted to Council agenda item 03.14.08

Date: 14 March 2024

Next review of system of Internal Controls due in September 2024

Additional comments by reviewer:

Checked monthly against the bank statement

Checked against the bank statement

Reviewed annually at personnel meeting

Clerk uses HMRC Basic PAYE tools program

Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked

Regular scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to BMSDC notification

Contracts of employment in place for staff

Contract annually reviewed

Records updated to reflect relevant legislation

PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer