

**Internal Audit Check - Whimble Parish Council  
Year Ended 31st March 202**

**1 - Records & Accounting**

**Commentary**

1.1 - Records Maintained	With the introduction of the accounting software early in the financial year the regular reconciliations happened within a controlled system. They have all been published online for public access, signed off and minuted at meetings and the year end balance clearly agrees.
1.2 - Internal Controls	As per prior year, fundamental controls remain in place, dual sign off for payments. The introduction of budgetary monitoring reports is a clear and structured internal reporting tool in the current climate and I commend the introduction of this. Action has also clearly been taken on the updating of bank mandates that were quite out of date and I note that the recent Cllr resignation has meant further changes are needed to be made but already in motion.
1.3 - VAT	Given the introduction of the accounting system the VAT reclaim for the year and all the transactions have been posted through then the VAT reclaim process has had its manual element removed and therefore is likely to be more robust. The receipt from the prior year claim has clearly been received and VAT there is no reason to think VAT has not been accounted for correctly.
1.4 - Asset Register	Asset register maintained, though it looked as though an item still had value that had been written off on further conversations with the clerk it is clearly still in use.
1.5 - Petty Cash	No petty cash transactions to be considered.

**2 - Procedures and Process**

**Commentary**

2.1 - Governance Review	The AGAR has clearly been considered separately and in order by the Parish Council and the exercise for public rights clearly displayed. Due process as expected has clearly been followed and the new clerk in post evidently knows the requirements going forward; this is evidenced in the agenda for May 20th 2024 meeting.
2.2 - Code of Conduct	All Cllrs publish their declarations of interest and acceptance on appointment.
2.3 - Website Maintenance	As per prior year it would be ideal to have as many prior year AGARs and documents loaded for public view on the external website though I recognise the practice has now become standard and as a result the history is being built and presented over time.
2.4 - Review of Minutes Findings	Check of minutes carried out; nothing unexpected discovered.
2.5 - Regular Bank Reporting	Prior year issues with bank reporting have clearly been resolved, reconciliations are presented to the Council and approved appropriately, as above the introduction of the software has vastly improved the robustness of the inputting and subsequent manipulation of data.
2.6 - Budgeting	With the introduction of actual against budget reporting there is clear consideration of the financial position throughout the year. From the spot checks it looks as though the budget has slightly over anticipated the costs for the year and I'd suggest Cllrs be mindful of that going forward.
2.7 - Banking	The Victory Hall in Whimble is now clearly established as the address for the Council which creates stability. Santander bank mandate and practical use remains an issue as discussed with the Clerk. It might be worth considering transferring the funds to a more easily accessible bank and if possible seeing if there are higher interest bearing accounts available to a parish council in the higher interest rate environment though I fully expect this has the potential for an administrative burden.
2.8 - Payroll and PAYE / NIC	Evidence of PAYE and NIC considered in receipts and payments files and publicly declared.
2.9 - Cllr Vacancies	There are four vacancies on the Council, there has been clear effort to fill these vacancies with adverts in Whimble News. I understand it can be difficult to find willing individuals and I would just note that the more individuals the more robust a Parish Council can be.
2.10 - Schedule of Policies	The Clerk and Council have clearly invested time and effort in preparing clear protocols and controls related to a wide range of key policies combined with a schedule for review and consideration. This is no small amount of work and is very much to be commended. These are a public facing expression of the importance on controls and considerations carried out by the Parish Council and should give confidence to local residents.

**Recommendations**

- On insurance I would only flag that any new events, assets or activities may need additional insurance or at least flagging to the insurers as part of the cover.
- As mentioned above I would recommend the Parish Council consider moving away from Santander bank, in the higher interest rate environment greater returns could be secured on the returns and the administrative burden of the account is clearly problematic though I appreciate this will not be easy.

The date of first contact for this audit was 22nd March 2024 and final conversations with the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer took place on 16th May 2024.

**Tom Hobson  
Internal Auditor - Whimble Parish Council  
17th May 2024**