



Amy Tregellas
Clerk to the Council
Whimble Parish Council

13th April 2026

Dear Amy,

INTERNAL AUDIT 2026

Parish & Town Auditing Services have been appointed to undertake the internal audits at Whimble Parish Council. The annual internal audit for 2025/26 financial year was completed on 11th April 2026.

I can confirm that I am independent of the Parish Council.

As stated in the Letter of Engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete the internal audit section of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year. In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements. This will be undertaken by the Council's appointed External Auditor.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These controls are included in the following report.

The Audit has identified a number of recommendations to help update and improve the Council's current procedures. The audit has found no areas of concern and the Council's procedures and controls are generally working well.

Thank you for all the information you have provided to enable the audit to be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Russell, Internal Auditor

INTERNAL AUDIT

Outlined below is an overview of the 10 Assertions within the Practitioners Guide 2025. Each of these are dealt with under the relevant Governance sections contained in Section 1 of the AGAR:

AGS Assertion 1 — Financial management and preparation of accounts

- Accounting Records and supporting documents:
- Bank reconciliation:
- Budget setting:
- Investments:
- Reserves:
- General Reserves:
- Earmarked and other reserves:

AGS Assertion 2 — Internal control

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:
- Safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money:
- Employment:
- VAT
- Fixed assets and equipment:
- Loans and long-term liabilities:

AGS Assertion 3 — Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

- Acting with its powers:

AGS Assertion 4 — Exercise of public rights

AGS Assertion 5 — Risk management

AGS Assertion 6 — Internal audit

AGS Assertion 7 — Reports from auditors

AGS Assertion 8 — Significant events

AGS Assertion 9 — Trust funds (local councils only)

AGS Assertion 10 — Digital and data compliance

The following headings are based on Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

The Parish Clerk has been appointed as the RFO (LGA1972 s151). This is clearly stated on the website ([Council - Whimble Parish Council](#))

The roll over figure is £74,696 (Box 7).

The Council maintains its accounts using the Rialtas Alpha finance software. A sample of the financial transactions between 1st April and 31st March 2026 has been undertaken. The following checks were carried out:

- A review of the cashbook against the bank statements and invoices paid;
- A sample of Payments have been checked against the bank statements to verify accuracy;
- Expenditure incurred is appropriate.

There is a proper process in place to ensure that financial information is correctly recorded and reported to Council as part of its governance procedures. Procedures are included in the Financial Regulations and a Scheme of Delegation. Both policies are available on the Council website.

A list of invoices for payment is presented to Full Council for payment as part of the agenda and is uploaded onto the website as part of the meeting papers. Approvals are minuted in the Council minutes and payment is via online banking. All payments are authorised by two Councillors.

The Council has a Risk Management Strategy in place ([WPC Risk Management Strategy - May 2025.pdf](#)) and a Risk Assessment ([WPC Risk Assessment - May 2025.pdf](#))

Bank reconciliations are prepared monthly, presented to Full Council as part of the agenda papers (also uploaded onto the website for transparency) and signed off by Council.

There is appropriate segregation in place and a robust process to enable the detection and identification of potential fraud.

The year end bank reconciliation has been completed. This was referenced back to the bank statements. The final balance held by the Council amounts to £79,378.29 as at 31st March 2026

Note: Balances are increasing and Council may wish to develop an Investment Strategy in case balances go over the £100,000 threshold. It is noted that the play area costs will reduce balances by £60k thus reducing the requirement, but if for any outside reason the works do not go ahead this year Council will need to monitor this.

The Council has met this control objective.

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Tenders and Contracts are governed by Financial Regulations. All contracts being tendered should be published on the Parish Council's website as well as the Find a Tender portal where required.

The Council has not tendered for any works this financial year. It has obtained quotations for various works and in the case of the play area upgrade has sought advice from an appropriate source to confirm that it has followed financial regulations.

List of contracts 2025/26:

- Parish Council car park works: Approved 19th May 2025 (minute 11.vi). Subsequently undertaken by Young Farmers;
- Town Lane works: Approved 21 July 2025 meeting (minute 61.iii)
- Riverbed and Riverbank clearance works: Approved 21 July 2025 meeting (minute 61vi)
- Internal Auditor: Approved 20 October 2025 (minute 109)
- Insurance: Approved 19 January 2026 (minute 166)
- Parish Field Play Area Project: Approved 16 March 2026 (minute 198.i)

Standing Orders were updated on 19th May 2025. Financial Regulations were updated on 19th May 2025.

Currently the limits between the two documents match.

The invoices procedure is as follows:

- On receipt they are reviewed for accuracy;
- Coded to correct cost centre (noted that regular reports are run to ensure that invoices are coded to correct cost centre and nominal code);
- Codes are noted on the invoices;
- Invoices are printed and filed. They are also signed off at each Council meeting and then filed in relevant financial year;
- Invoices are also saved electronically;
- Payment schedule presented at each meeting for approval;
- Payments ratified at each meeting. Noted that Scheme of Delegation allows Clerk/RFO to make payments during August when there is no meeting. Invoices are sent to authorised signatories for approval prior to payment.

There is appropriate segregation in place.

VAT is normally claimed annually. The claim for 2024/25 of £1,449.83 was received on 16/04/2025. The 2025/26 VAT claim amounting to £2,500.30 has been submitted.

Noted that a VAT claim for the 2022/23 financial year has also recently been submitted amounting to £1,992.94 following the discovery that no reclaim had been submitted for the 2022/23 financial year.

The Council does not have a credit card in place.

The Council does not have General Power of Competence in place.

The Council has met this control objective.

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

The Council has a Risk Management Strategy in place ([WPC Risk Management Strategy - May 2025.pdf](#)) and a Risk Assessment ([WPC Risk Assessment - May 2025.pdf](#))

An Asset Register is in place and a great deal of work has been undertaken to update and ensure that it is accurate. The value of assets meets Box 9 of the AGAR: £118,351.15.

The asset register has been reviewed a number of times during the year and a number of items have been disposed of. **Recommend** that the end of year asset register includes all the amendments made during the year in the interest of transparency.

The Council is insured through James Hallam Insurance Brokers with Ansvar Charity and Community. Policy number ACY 2457034. Cover commenced on 1st February 2026 and runs until 31st January 2027 and is a three year agreement.

A review of the insurance policy has been undertaken and Council is adequately insured. It includes a fidelity guarantee of £100,000.

The Council is responsible for a play area at Parish Fields although it is not fully operative at present. This has been the subject of much discussion, and the play area is going to be upgraded. Work is expected to begin in June 2026.

Noted that the Council will be putting in place an annual independent inspection and regular monthly inspections of the new play area and will be removing the existing play equipment that is not usable.

The Council has adequate internal controls in place to ensure that it carries out its day-to-day business effectively and efficiently. There is an internal controls policy in place ([WPC Internal Controls Statement - May 2025.pdf](#))

The Council has also introduced a quarterly Internal Controls checklist ([WPC Internal Control Checklist - May 2025.pdf](#)) which is presented and signed off at the appropriate Council meetings. It reviews the various internal controls that are in place and it is undertaken by an appointed Councillor.

The Council has met this control objective.

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

At its meeting held on 16th December 2024 Full Council formally approved the budget and the setting of a precept. (Minute 105)

05. Draft Budget and precept for 2025/26 financial year

The Council RESOLVED to set the 2025/26 budget at £29793.00 and to set the Precept for 2025/26 at £28,443.00 meaning that the Band D total will be £38.11 (an increase of £1.75 or 4.80%). The balancing figure of £500.00 will be met from savings. (Proposed by Cllr McArthur, seconded by Cllr Dearden)

It has been confirmed that a precept of £28,443 was requested. (MHCLG Parish Code E1131P066)

Budget monitoring is undertaken at each Full Council meeting. The budget monitoring report is uploaded onto the website as part of the financial papers..

The Council reviews its income and expenditure against the budget. Earmarked Reserves are transferred during the year to offset specific expenditure agreed by Council.

The Council has set up Earmarked Reserves and these are reviewed during the year. The EMRs at start of year amounted to £7,493.60, £55,321.93 was added and £2,660 has been spent leaving a total of £60,155.53 remaining.

The Council has an adequate General Reserve to meet the recommendations in place, with specific allocated EMRs also in place.

The Council had the following Bank Statement Balances as at 31st March 2026:

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT
Unity Trust Savings [REDACTED]	£60,799.00
Unity Trust Savings [REDACTED]	£18,079.29
Current A/C [REDACTED]	£500.00
TOTAL	£79,378.29

The Council has met this control objective.

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

The Council has no aged debtors.

Whimble Parish Council manages allotment sites at Grove Road and Heberton Close. There is a specific allotment page on its website. Allotment income is recorded in the accounting package and a spreadsheet and the account is reconciled annually. A Tenancy Agreement is in place and is signed by allotment holders. Copies of signed agreements have been reviewed.

The Council is not a burial authority.

The Council does not hire out any venues.

The Council does not have any leases in place.

Council's other income for 2025/26 included bank interest, CIL income and grant funding.

The Council has met this control objective.

F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

The Council does not operate a petty cash system and did not receive any cash payments during the financial year.

The Council has met this control objective.

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

The Clerk has a contract in place.

Members do not receive a members' allowance but can claim expenses. Expenses are reclaimed using an official form.

A sample of staff salaries has been checked and confirmed. Salaries paid during the year have been reviewed. Gross pay is calculated in accordance with the relevant NJC scale.

Tax codes are included on the payslips and deductions properly calculated.

Payroll is undertaken using the HMRC payroll tool. Pay slips are generated.

Pay slips have been reviewed and it has been confirmed that tax is properly deducted.

No pension contributions have been made.

No National Insurance contributions have been deducted. Out of scope.

A test sample was undertaken and it was confirmed that the correct net pay was paid to the employee with tax and NI contributions correctly deducted and paid to the respective agencies.

The Council has met this control objective.

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

An Asset Register is in place and has been reviewed. Asset purchase cost is recorded and additional information is included where appropriate.

The current Asset Register does not include asset disposals but these have been minuted during the year as the register has been reviewed regularly. The asset value has been correctly recorded in box 9 of the AGAR.

A comparison of the insurance schedule against the asset register has been undertaken. Council has adequate insurance cover in place.

Council has no long-term investments in place.

Council has no loans in place.

The Council has met this control objective.

I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

Bank reconciliations are prepared monthly and are signed off by Full Council. Bank reconciliations are uploaded onto the website.

The Council has met this control objective.

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Accounts are maintained on a receipts and payments basis.

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick “not covered”).

Not covered.

The Council has met this control objective.

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

The following information should be published on the Parish Council's website under the Smaller Authorities Transparency Code ([SI/SR Template](#))

Expenditure exceeding £100

Local authorities must publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £100. [Published as part of the agenda finance papers.](#)

End of year accounts

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

Annual governance statement

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

Internal audit report

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

List of councillor or member responsibilities

Annual publication of councillor or member responsibilities no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

Location of public land and building assets

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. Parish councils and port health authorities to publish details of all public land and building assets – either in its full asset and liabilities register or as an edited version. [Published](#)

Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings

Publication of draft minutes from all formal meetings not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. Publication of meeting agendas and associated meeting papers not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate is taking place. [Published](#)

The Council has met this control objective.

M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (*during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set*).

The publication requirements were met. The Notice states 9th June to 18th July 2025. This meets the statutory 30 day requirement.

The Council did not formally minute the dates of the public notice at the meeting where the AGAR was approved on 19th May 2025. **Recommend** that Council considers minuting the public notice dates and record them in the minutes once approved to improve transparency.

The Council has met this control objective.

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR.

Publication Requirements Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage: Before 1 July 2025 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited: [Published](#)
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, approved and signed, page 4: [Published](#)
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25, approved and signed, page 5: [Published](#)

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report. [Published](#).

The Council has met this control objective.

O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.

Council has a .gov.uk email addresses for its Clerk/RFO and its Councillors. Council meets best practice advice by having a .gov.uk domain for its website and email account.

The Council has adopted an IT policy as required. ([Whimble PC IT Policy.pdf](#))

The Council has an Accessibility Statement published on its website. ([Accessibility Statement - Whimble Parish Council](#)). **Recommend that the accessibility statement is reviewed and updated to ensure that it meets WCAG2.2AA.**

Note that since September 2020, all parish and Parish councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). As from October 2024 that rating level changed from WCAG2.1 AA to WCAG2.2AA so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations.

It has been confirmed that Whimble Parish Council website does not comply with WCAG 2.2 AA. It only achieves 56% in the accessibility test and the minimum is 70% [Accessibility Test | See if Your Website is ADA-Compliant](#)

Accessibility has been reviewed and the parish council section of the website scores 9.4 out of 10. [WAVE Report of Home - Whimble Parish Council](#)

Recommend that Council contacts its web provider to ensure it meets the above requirements.

Data Protection requirements:

- Data Protection Officer – Parish Clerk
- Data Audit: In the process of being undertaken

- Training for staff and Councillors: To be undertaken
- Data Protection Policy: In place [WPC Data Protection Policy October 2025.pdf](#)
- Secure data to protect it from Data Breaches: In place ([Whimble Parish Council Data Breach Policy.pdf](#))

The Council has the following Data Protection Policies in place:

- Privacy Notice: General, Staff & Councillors and allotment holders.

Council will need to ensure that the following requirements are met (Noted that this is currently being actioned):

- Undertake a data audit and present to Council for adoption
- Adopt a Subject Access Request procedure
- Adopt a Data Retention Policy
- Organise GDPR training for staff and councillors;
- Ensure that both hard copy and electronic data have relevant protections in place. For hard copy records this will be identified by the audit. For electronic data it is recommended that your IT provider outlines what protections are in place, how often data is backed up and how it is stored. Ensure that all computers have some level of virus protection.

A Freedom of Information Policy is in place: [WPC Freedom of Information Policy.pdf](#) and [WPC Publication Scheme - October 2025.pdf](#)

The Council meets the Smaller Councils Transparency Code as required.

The Council does not meet this control objective.

P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

The Council is not a sole trustee.