

HEELIS&LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Wickham Market Parish Council – 2024/2025

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and the guidance and instruction in the Practitioners Guide 2024. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £118,928.64 Expenditure: £119,149.71 Reserves: £85,420.76

2025 AGAR Completion:

Section One: [Yes – to be approved by council](#)

Section Two: [Yes \(draft figures\) – to be approved by council](#)

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025: [Yes](#)

Certificate of Exemption: [No](#)

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

All were found to be in order. VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts.

The Council hold the General Power of Competence and LGAs137 does not apply.

The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced.

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Tenders
Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: [Yes](#)
Reviewed: [20/5/2024 \(Ref: FC24:19.1\)](#)
Financial Regulations in place: [Yes](#)
Reviewed: [8/7/2024 \(Ref: FGP24:35\)](#)
[20/5/2024 \(Ref: FC24:19.2\)](#)
[15/7/2024 \(Ref: FC24:52\)](#)

VAT reclaimed during the year: [Yes](#)

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Registered: No

Submission Period: Amount:
01/04/2023-31/03/2024 £8,340.50

General Power of Competence: Yes Adopted: FC23:17

Policy Review Schedule in place: Yes

There were no tenders during the year that exceeded the £30,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold.

The Council reviewed the following documents during the year of audit:

29/4/2024

- Governance documents (Ref: FGP24:17)*

3/3/2024

- Volunteer Agreement (FGP24:95.2)*
- Volunteer Tool Box Talk and Attendance Record (Ref: FGP24:95.3)*
- 3 – year Business Plan (Ref: FGP24:101)*

20/5/2024

- Committee Terms of Reference (FC24:13)*
- Working Party Terms of Reference (FC24:13)*
- Governance documents (Ref: FC24:23)*

15/7/2024

- Biodiversity Plan (Ref: FC24:53)*

16/9/2024

- Cemetery Regulations (Ref: 88)*

20/1/2025

- Village Hall Modernisation Committee Terms of Reference (Ref: FC24:137.1)*

17/3/2025

- Volunteer Agreement (FC24:162.1)*
- Volunteer Tool Box Talk and Attendance Record (Ref: FC24:162.2)*
- Risk Assessments (Tree Planting, Coppicing, Conservation WP, Litter Picking) (FC24:162.3)*
- 3-Year Business Plan (Ref: FC24:163)*

Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council
Compliance with Data Protection regulations

Risk Assessment document in place: Yes
Data Protection registration: Yes Ref: ZA236912

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Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulations have changed and the new Regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. It is likely that this will affect the way in which the Council handles its data. Due to the financial risk associated with the General Data Protection Regulations, the Council have included this in their Risk Assessment.

Privacy Policy published: Yes

Link: <https://wickhammarket-pc.gov.uk/assets/Parish-Council-Documents-/Governance-2024-25/WMPC-Privacy-Notice.pdf>

Insurance was in place for the year of audit with a review being undertaken at a meeting held on 8/7/2024 (Ref: FGP24:31.1) and 20/5/2024 (Ref: FC24:17). The Risk Assessment was reviewed at a meeting held on 3/3/2025 (Ref: FGP24:95.4) and 20/5/2024 (Ref: FC24:20).

Statement of Internal Controls in place: Yes

Reviewed: 3/3/2025 (Ref: FGP24:95.1) and 17/3/2025 (Ref: FC24:159)

The Council have effective internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Bank signatories were reviewed at a meeting held on 20/5/2024 (Ref: 14).

Fidelity Cover: £250,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Transparency

Under the **Transparency code for smaller authorities**, smaller councils with income/expenditure under £25,000 should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

Smaller Council: No

Website: <https://wickhammarket-pc.gov.uk/>

The Council is not subject to the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller Councils. The Transparency Code for Councils with a turnover exceeding £200,000 is not covered as part of the Internal Audit.

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15** councils must publish on their website:

External audit report

2024 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes

2024 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes

2024 Annual Return, Section Three Published – Yes

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations** councils must publish on their website:

Notice of period for the exercise of public rights
Published – Yes

Period of Exercise of Public Rights

Publication Date: **22/5/2024** Start Date: **3/6/2024** End Date: **12/7/2024**

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** council are required to display AGARs for the five years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 on their website.

The Council have met the publication requirements.

Budgetary controls supporting documents

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and

Precept: £99,000 (2025-2026)	Date: 20/1/2025 (Ref: 135.5)
Precept: £79,015 (2024-2025)	Date: 15/1/2024 (Ref: FC23:134)

Effective budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and a sample of income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Allotment fees were reviewed at a meeting held on 8/7/2024 (Ref: FGP24:32).

Petty Cash

Associated books and established system in place

A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork. No Petty Cash held.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment and pensions

PAYE System in place: **Yes**
Employer's Reference: **120/UA59633**
P60s issued: **Yes**

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The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Payroll is outsourced. Supporting paperwork is in place and P60s have been produced as part of the year end process.

Eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme.

It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 20/5/2024 (Ref: 36).

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place with a review being undertaken at a meeting held on 20/5/2024 (Ref: 16). Values are recorded at cost and insurance value. The total value of assets are recorded at £807,542. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.

Bank Reconciliation

Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Bank Balances at 31 March were confirmed as:

<i>Barclays Community</i>	<i>xxxx6664</i>	<i>£1,136.18</i>
<i>Barclays BP</i>	<i>xxxx1282</i>	<i>£24,066.64</i>
<i>CCLA PSDF</i>	<i>xxxx8774</i>	<i>£60,217.94</i>

The Council had no outstanding loans at the year end.

Reserves

General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council have adequate general reserves (£49,500 plus £142 unallocated funds) and have identified earmarked reserves of £35,778.76 in their year end accounts. It is noted that the FGP Committee noted to increase the level of general reserves to £49,500, which equated to 50% of the precept (Ref: 6/1/2025 – FGP24:80.2).

Year-end procedures

Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End of year accounts are prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis.

Sole Trustee

The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

The 2024 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 20/5/2024 (Ref: FC24:11).

A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on 17/3/2025 (Ref: FC24:160).

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 18/3/2024 (Ref: FC23:159.1) and 17/3/2025 (Ref: FC24:160).

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2024 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 20/5/2024 (Ref: FC24:21).

The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 16/9/2024 (Ref: FC24:78).

There were no matters arising from the External Audit.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 20/5/2024. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for their assistance during the course of the audit work and the quality of documentation provided for the audit.

**Heather Heelis**

Heelis & Lodge
23 April 2025

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INVOICE

To:

Wickham Market Parish Council

Invoice No: HL9549
Date: 24 April 2025

Details	Quantity	Amount (£)	Total (£)
To carry out Internal Audit for Wickham Market Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 £100,001 - £150,000 Banding	1	320.00	320.00
Total			320.00

Please make cheques payable to: Heelis & Lodge

Bank Details: Account 02539349 **Sort Code 09-01-50**

NB Change to bank account details

Terms – 14 days

Thank you.

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