

# **Tharston and Hapton Parish Council**

Internal Audit Report  
Financial Year 2024/25

Prepared by Sonya Blythe  
7 April 2025

I have completed an internal audit of the accounts for Tharston and Haptom Parish Council for the year ending March 2025.

My findings are detailed below using the tests provided in the Governance and Accountability (England) guidance.

Internal control	Test	Observations
Proper bookkeeping	Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?  Is the cashbook arithmetically correct?  Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	Yes  Yes  Yes
Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and payment controls	Has the council formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations?  Date Standing Orders last reviewed	Yes  July 24 minutes
	Date Financial Regulations last reviewed	July 24 minutes
	Has a Responsible finance officer been appointed with specific duties?	Clerk is RFO
	Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted?	Yes, evidenced from invoice through bank and minutes
	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	Yes, separate column in cashbook. Claimed throughout the year
	Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	N/A
	Have S137 payments been approved and included in the minutes as such?	N/A
Risk management arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?  Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment or review of their risk management scheme?	No  Yes, July 24 minutes
	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Liability cover in place. Fidelity cover “not operative” on schedule?
	Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	March 24

Internal control	Test	Observations
Budgetary controls	Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept and has this been minuted as being approved?	2425 – January 24 minutes 2526 – January 25 minutes
	Has the precept been calculated from the budget and been approved?	24/25 – recorded as £25,045.25 2526 – recorded as £37,567.90
	Does the budget include an actual completed year?	No – current year and budgeting year only
	Is actual expenditure against budget regularly reported to the council?	Only minuted in January
Income controls	Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	No
	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Yes
	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	Statement £25045.25 Remittance £25045.25
Petty cash procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts?	N/A
	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	N/A
Payroll controls	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	N/A
	Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions?	Yes, seen previously
	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	Yes
	Are salaries above the National Living Wage/Minimum Wage?	Yes  Nov 24 - national pay award implemented. NOTE: this doesn't need to be approved by Council. The annual cost of living increment is a contractual obligation
	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	Yes

Internal control	Test	Observations
	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	Yes, accounted for on payslips and payments made to HMRC
Asset controls	Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	Yes
	Are the assets and Investments registers up to date? When were these last reviewed?	March 25 minutes
	Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	Yes
Bank reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account and is this reported to council?	Yes
	Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion?	Balances reported each meeting
	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	No
	Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	N/A
Year-end procedures	Are year-end accounts prepared using the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)?	Yes, R&P
	Do accounts agree with the cash book?	AGAR – £11718  Statements -  Reconciliation - £11717.42
	Has a year-end bank reconciliation been undertaken?	
	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	Yes, cashbook matched to bank statements
	Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?	N/A
Procedural	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	Yes
	Have points raised on the last Internal Audit report been considered by council and actioned?	S137 – power no longer required as Council hold GPOC. Completed.  Email management – the JPAG Practitioners Guide states that “every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council. Completed.

Internal control	Test	Observations
		When budget setting it is best practice to have a complete budget year on the document for Council to see. No.
Transparency: For smaller councils with turnover under £25,000	Minutes for whole year on website?	Yes
	Agendas for whole year on website?	No
	Payments over £100 detailed on website?	Yes, included within minutes
	Electors' rights advertised on website?	Yes
	Councillors' responsibilities detailed on website?	Yes
	Last financial year's AGAR on website?	Yes
	Land and building assets details on website? (Description, location, owner/leaseholder, date and cost of acquisition and present use)	Yes
Burial Authorities only	Are fees levied in accordance with the Council's approved scale of fees and charges?	N/A
	Have fees for the cemetery been reviewed and agreed by Council?	N/A
	Were comparisons made with other cemeteries prior to setting the fees?	N/A
	Have burial books been kept up to date and are they safely stored?	N/A
Allotments only only	Has a list of allotment holders with amounts paid to Council been submitted?	N/A
	Have fees for the allotments been reviewed and agreed by Council?	N/A
Councils with charities only	Have Charities reported and accounted separately?	N/A

Internal control	Test	Observations
ICO	Have the Charity accounts been independently audited?	N/A
	Have the Charity accounts and Annual Return been filed within the legal time limit?	N/A
	Is Council registered with the Information Commissioners Office?	Yes, April
General Data Protection Regulations	Has the Council adopted a Data Protection Policy?	Yes, on website
Other	Has the Council put in place Privacy Notices?	Yes, on website

Thank you to Alan for supplying everything so promptly.

- I have checked through your accounts and confirmed them against income and expenditure receipts, as well as against payments in your cashbook. Bank reconciliations are regularly carried out for the accounts.
- I have confirmed that your Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are up to date.
- I have noted that your VAT has been claimed within the past year
- I have verified that your insurance is adequate, subject to a note below.
- I confirm that your payroll management meets requirements
- I have reviewed your budget setting process and noted that you provide Council with regular spend against budget information
- I have reviewed the AGAR against your year-end bank reconciliations and your accounts

I have no concerns to raise and as such have signed the internal audit section of the AGAR.

#### **Notes / recommendations for 25/26:**

After checking the minutes I could only see that your spend against budget to date was minuted in January. I expect you did receive the report more often, but if you ensure that it

is minuted then the external auditor will be confident that accounts have been well monitored throughout the year.

*Sonya*

Sonya Blythe  
Internal auditor