

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Wicken Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	G Wells	Date of report:	24 th April 2023
Year ending:	31 March 2023	Date audit carried out:	24 th April 2023

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Clerk for forwarding all of the additional requested 'Year End' documents to me allowing me to carry out a thorough inspection of the Council's records and activities during the period 2022-2023. Moreover, to thank both the Chair of the Council Neil Gordon-Lee, and your Clerk John Westlake, for meeting with me to run through the audit requirements, expectations and issues in greater detail.

At our meeting I acknowledged that the Clerk had joined the Council part way through the period being audited and that it was evident that finance and governance issues had been tightened up although there were a few issues which were still in the process of being sorted out. It was apparent that the Council's Clerk had an understanding of the requirements of their role, that of the Council, and has a supportive Chair.

During our discussion I raised, amongst other items, the importance of regularly reporting on the status of the Council's financial position including regular bank reconciliations and applying the correct legislation in the ledger to all payments being made. This ensures that Members of the Public can easily identify the financial position of the Council and confirm that the Council is not acting ultra vires when making any payments. Payments should be formally approved and minuted as such.

There is a need to identify any S137 payments in the ledger and the reason for such payments being made.

The Clerk and Chair updated me on the issue arising with the Council's banking provider with regard administration and authorisation and are very aware of the risks associated with the current status quo where the Clerk also has administration and authorisation. Indeed, for

some time the Clerk has been attempting to sort this out with the bank and is hopeful that the situation will shortly be resolved and the risk minimised / eradicated.

The Council are in the process of resolving staffing costs and have, I am pleased to say, engaged a company to operate PAYE on behalf of the Council. Therefore, going forwards this situation should be resolved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wicken Parish Council and the Clerk for working to ensure that the Council manages its finances and governance well. I very much look forward to auditing Wicken Parish Council in 2024.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs G Wells
Internal Auditor to the Council
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The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2022	Year ending 31 March 2023
1. Balances brought forward	32274	39983
2. Annual precept	8000	8400
3. Total other receipts	11906	17534
4. Staff costs	0	0
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	12197	33920
7. Balances carried forward	39983	31997
8. Total cash and investments	39983	31997
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	240255	240255
10. Total borrowings	0	0

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2023)*. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils and it sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed.