

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Drinkstone 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: £34,991 Expenditure: £30,921 Ear Reserves: £20,542 General: £14,071

AGAR 2024 / 2025 Completion:

Section One: **Yes, unsigned**

Section Two: **Yes 2025 only**

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. LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year-end accounts. 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: **3rd June 2024 (Ref: 6)**

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **3rd June 2024 (Ref: 6)**

VAT reclaimed during the year: **Yes**

Registered: **No**

General Power of Competence: **No**

Policy Review Schedule in place: **Yes**

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

Recommendation (1): To update Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to change the threshold of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to £30,000..

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Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy PILCM

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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 – ZA159726 Expiry 10/02/2026

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

Insurance was in place for the year of audit. The Risk Assessment was reviewed at a meeting held on 3rd June 2024 (Ref: 9 & 10)

Statement of Internal Controls in place: Yes

The Council have good 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.

The annual play area inspection has been undertaken during the year as per the invoice paid to Mid Suffolk DC on 30th July 2024.

Fidelity Cover: £50,000

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: **Yes**

Website: www.drinkstone.village.co.uk

- a) all items of expenditure above £100
Published – Yes – contained within the minutes
- b) annual governance statement (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes
- c) end-of-year accounts (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes
- d) internal audit report (By 1 July)
2024 Annual Return, Section Four Published – Yes
- e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
Published – Yes
- f) the details of public land and building assets (By 1 July)
Published – Yes
- g) minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings
Published – Yes

The Council have met the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller councils.

Under **The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 9(6 & 7)** a smaller council having certified itself as an Exempt Authority must publish on their website:

Certificate of Exemption

Certificate of Exemption Published - Yes

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** a council is required to display AGAR's for the five years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 on their website. The council has complied with this requirement.

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15(2b)** 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: 30/06/24 Start Date: 01/07/24 End Date: 28/04/24

Budgetary controls	<p>Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and supporting documents</p> <p>Precept: £10,000 (2024 / 2025) Date: 4th December 2023 (Ref: 8) Precept: £10,855 (2025 / 2026) Date: 4th November 2024 (Ref: 7) & 2nd December 2024 (Ref: 8).</p> <p><i>Good 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.</i></p>
Income controls	<p>Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms</p> <p><i>All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and income received and banked cross-referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.</i></p>
Petty Cash	<p>Associated books and established system in place</p> <p><i>A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork. No Petty Cash held.</i></p>
Payroll controls	<p>PAYE and NIC in place where necessary. Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures Records relating to contracts of employment</p> <p>PAYE System in place: Yes – SALC Payroll Services Employer PAYE Reference: 475/KA60330 P60's issued: Yes</p> <p><i>The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Payroll is outsourced. All supporting paperwork is in place and a P60 has been produced as part of the year-end process.</i></p> <p><i>No eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme. The last date of re-declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator was not submitted in the Audit file.</i></p>
Asset control	<p>Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets Cross-checking on insurance cover</p> <p><i>A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at insurance value. The total value of assets is recorded at £70,380. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.</i></p>

Bank Reconciliation	<p>Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>Reconciled Bank Balances were confirmed as:</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><i>Unity Trust Instant</i></td> <td><i>£28,908.93</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Unity Trust Current</i></td> <td><i>£ 5,704.21</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Unity Trust Instant</i>	<i>£28,908.93</i>	<i>Unity Trust Current</i>	<i>£ 5,704.21</i>
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Reserves	<p>General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council Earmarked Reserves are identified</p> <p><i>The Council have adequate general reserves (£14,071) and has identified earmarked reserves in its year-end accounts.</i></p>				
Year-end procedures	<p>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.</p> <p><i>End of year accounts is prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis.</i></p>				
Sole Trustee	<p>The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee</p> <p><i>The Council is not a sole trustee.</i></p>				
Internal Audit Procedures	<p><i>The 2024 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at meetings held on 3rd June 2024 (Ref: 2.8) & 1st July 2024 (Ref: 6 to 10).</i></p> <p><i>A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on 3rd June 2024 (Ref: 5).</i></p> <p><i>Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 3rd June 2024 (Ref: 5).</i></p>				
External Audit	<p><i>The Council formally approved the 2024 AGAR at meetings of the full Council held on 3rd June 2024 (Ref: 2.8) & 1st July 2024 (Ref: 6 to 10).</i></p> <p><i>The Council declared themselves Exempt from External audit for the 2023-2024 financial year.</i></p>				

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 13th May 2024. **The first item of business was not 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 his assistance during the course of the audit work and for the quality of documentation presented in the Audit File.

Dave Crimmin

Dave Crimmin PSLCC
Heelis & Lodge
24th June 2025

HEELIS&LODGE

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www.heelisandlodge.co.uk

INVOICE

To:

Drinkstone Parish Council
Tyne Barn
Drinkstone
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP30 9TG

Invoice No: HLD2454
Date: 24th June 2025

Details	Quantity	Amount (£)	Total (£)
To carry out Year-end Internal Audit for Drinkstone Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2025.	1	220.00	220.00
Total			220.00

Please make cheques payable to: Heelis & Lodge

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

Terms – 14 days

Thank you.

HEELIS&LODGE

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