

Bridget.C.Bowen FCA
86 High Street
Weston
Bath BA1 4DD

Tel: 07465 416597

Email: bridget.c.bowen@outlook.com

Ms E Sylvester
Clerk to St Andrews Parish Council
Redhouse Community Centre
Frankel Avenue
Swindon SN25 2GY

14 June 2022

Dear Emma

ST ANDREWS PARISH COUNCIL

Internal audit report - Year ended 31 March 2022

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) require all Town and Parish Councils to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of their risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

I am bound by the ethical guidelines of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. I confirm that I am independent of the Council.

The internal audit work I have carried out has been planned to enable me to give my opinion on the control objectives set out in the Annual Internal Auditor's Report on the 2021-22 Annual Governance and Accounts Return.

I have complied with the legal requirements and proper practices set out in:

- 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England)' 2021
- The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended).

I was appointed as internal auditor to the Parish Council for 2021-22 on 11 March 2021.

My final internal audit review for 2021-22 was on 14 June 2022.

Background

St Andrews Parish Council has income and expenditure of between £300,000 and £400,000 and is subject to review by the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn. The external auditor issued a clean audit report for 2020-21.

The Council is not a sole managing trustee.

The Council has income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 and it is good practice for the Council to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

The Council's accounting records are maintained on RBS Omega.

Internal audit checks

I have undertaken a series of audit tests on the Council's financial records, vouchers, documents, minutes, policies, procedures and insurance documentation to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parish Council's internal control framework. This internal audit report is based on the audit testing carried out at the visit.

During this visit I checked the following:

- Minutes of Council Meetings
- Bank and cash
- Petty cash
- Income
- Risk assessment
- Asset Register
- Action taken on the recommendations in prior report
- Year end checks

Findings

Details of good practice noted, my recommendations and other matters to be brought to the Council's attention are set out below.

Good practice

- The Clerk is an Advanced Qualified clerk
- The Council maintains its books and records on RBS software
- All records were up to date and easy to follow
- The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are reviewed regularly and are tailored appropriately for the Council
- The Council has appropriate policies in place
- The Clerk is aware of the requirements of GDPR and the Council is registered with the ICO
- Councillors attend training by the local branch of the National Association of Local Councils
- Bank reconciliations are prepared accurately and regularly
- Bank reconciliations are carried out promptly each month, and are checked by a councillor
- Details of all payments authorised at meetings are recorded in the minutes

Good practice continued

- All payment vouchers tested were evidenced as approved
- Brightpay is used for the payroll
- All eligible employees have either been auto-enrolled in a pension scheme or have opted out in writing
- All employees have contracts of employment
- The budgeting process is detailed and thorough and monitored throughout the year
- VAT claims are made regularly
- Councillors undertake regular spot checks throughout the year
- There are strong internal controls over cash receipts
- The risk assessment has been adopted during the year
- The asset register is complete and accurate and has been properly maintained
- Adequate insurance is in place
- Action has been taken, or is underway on all of the recommendations in the last internal audit report
- The Council complies with the Local Government Transparency Code (2015)
- The Council has taken appropriate action to enable it to continue to meet and function during the Covid-19 pandemic

Recommendations

Procedures

- The external auditor's report should be noted at a Council meeting when it is received.

Other matters to be brought to the Council's attention

- The Annual Internal Audit Report was completed with positive responses to all relevant objectives.

Conclusion

Based on the tests I have carried out at this interim internal audit visit, in my view, the internal control procedures in operation are appropriate and satisfactory to meet the needs of St Andrews Parish Council.

Next Steps

This report should be noted and taken to the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Council should decide what action will be taken on the recommendations I have made.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Bridget Bowen FCA

Internal auditor