

## **KINGSBURY EPISCOPI PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT 2023-24**

*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 staff and management and not left for internal audit.*

### **To: The Members of Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council:**

I carried out the Internal Audit with Kim Larsson, Clerk & RFO, remotely via a Microsoft Teams meeting. Kim provided me with the Section 2 Accounting Statement and full year accounts in advance of the meeting, and provided additional supplementary information as requested during the meeting to enable me to reach a conclusion regarding the enquiries I am required to make as set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR).

Prior to our Teams, I examined the publicly available information displayed on the council's website including a full review of the previous 12 months agendas and minutes, and the Council's policies.

I was satisfied to see that appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year and VAT accounted for.

I suggested a few "good practice" changes to the already good work being undertaken, such as providing a link to the Register of Interest forms on the Somerset Council website, fixing a few broken links on the website, and listing the Clerk with Members in the minutes, not simply "In attendance". The Clerk is a member of staff, and this should be reflected.

It was good to read in the minutes that the Clerk has asked for formal training on cemetery management, and I know from our discussion she is considering undertaking her CiLCA qualification which I trust the Council will wholeheartedly endorse from a Proper Practices perspective.

There were two important statutory issues identified during my audit process:

- (i) The Council's website contains most of the required information, but a priority we discussed from a Financial Regulations perspective is the need to adopt a Financial Risk Assessment. Proper practices require a Council to maintain a Financial Risk register/assessment and review it at least annually. Information on this can be found on page 65 of the 2023 Practitioners' Guide but as agreed, I will share a draft template which can be adapted to Kingsbury's requirements.
- (ii) The other area of issue is the lack of an asset register, so I was unable to check the £2,784 figure from the Accounting Statement. The Clerk was very much aware of this, and whilst has a list of assets owned by the Council, the inherited list does not contain any figures. The Clerk will look through historic records to try and determine the individual line-item costings and ensure it is maintained going forward and published on the website in advance of the 24/25 year end.

Because both of the above points are control measures I am required to check and see evidence of, I have unfortunately had to mark both as not being met on my AIAR, so an explanation will need to be provided when submitting the year end documentation to PKF Littlejohn.

Notwithstanding these two points however, I did witness from my thorough review that since joining last July, Kim has made a number of significant best practice improvements, and a few more, which I hope were helpful, were suggested going forward.

One of the control measures I am checking this year is website accessibility, and I was pleased to see that your website meets all the statutory requirements. It was also good to see that the Council has ICO membership. Whilst a legal requirement, it is often overlooked by many smaller parishes.

To conclude, having tested all aspects of the council's internal controls that I am required to consider, based on the information made available to me, I am satisfied that in all significant respects bar items C & H of the AIAR, that internal control objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the council's needs. Accordingly, I have completed and signed off the Annual Internal Audit Report as required.

Joanna Simonds, CiLCA, PSLCC - Internal Auditor to the Council

The figures submitted in the Accounting Statements 2023/24 are:

	<b>Year ending 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Year ending 31 March 2024</b>
1. Balances brought forward	66,420	81,347
2. Precept or Rates and Levies	40,000	44,000
3. Total other receipts	5,340	9,735
4. Staff costs	4,988	4,215
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. All other payments	25,425	35,667
7. Balances carried forward	81,347	95,200
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	81,347	95,200
9. Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	2,784	2,784
10. Total borrowings	0	0