LIGHTATOUCH
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05 May 2026

Parish Clerk
Smannell Parish Council

Dear Kevin

April 2025 –March 2026

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.

We confirm that we are independent of the Council.

The internal audit work we have carried out has been planned to enable us to give our opinion on the control objectives set out in the Annual Internal Auditor's Report on the 2025-2026 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

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

- 'Accountability and Governance for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England)' 2025
- The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended).

The Parish Clerk agreed that the 2025-2026 Internal Audit Review will be carried out on remotely. This was completed on Tuesday 05 May 2026.

In advance of the review the Clerk has also provided back-up information for the period April 2025 to March 2026 to support the current governance and financial management position of the Council.

Further confirmation has been obtained of good practice and compliance with the Transparency Code Regulation 2015 and the ICO publication scheme from the Council's website.

A series of independent audit tests were undertaken from the information made available to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of these internal controls.

The Parish Council will need to submit a Certificate of Exemption to the External Auditor for 2025-2026 as their income and expenditure falls below the threshold of £25,000 that requires the Parish Council to have an External Audit.

A full check was also carried out on completion of the Accountability and Governance Annual Return (AGAR) for 2025-2026 to ensure that the Parish Council will be able to adhere to the Transparency Code Regulation 2015.

As part of this Internal Audit Review, we checked that:

Bank Reconciliations

- the financial totals as at 31 March 2025 had been brought forward accurately.
- any un-presented items, online payments and un-banked income as at 31 March 2025 were checked to bank statements to verify these were banked in April 2025.
- all payments were checked and accounted for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- all income was banked and agreed to bank statements for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.
- bank reconciliations for the bank account had been carried out between 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, and totals agreed to those shown in the Cash Book.

Income and Expenditure

- we checked all income and expenditure entries in the cash book for 2025-2026 and can confirmed and that the details are recorded accurately to the bank statements transactions for the Parish Council in 2025-2026.

- test checks of the Cash Book totals for April 2025-2026 were checked to payment information to ensure that the details were correctly recorded, and VAT elements extracted correctly.
- Income recorded in the bank accounts was checked to ensure the details matched to those entries shown in the Cash Book.

VAT

- a VAT reimbursement claim has recently been submitted to HMRC for VAT elements from purchases in 2025-2026 for a total of £1333.77. This has now been received from HMRC and banked on the 29 April 2026.

Payroll Information
•We checked to ensure that any deductions of PAYE, were correctly deducted from salary and that appropriate payments are made to HMRC.

Asset Register
•we confirmed with the Parish Council has approved the Asset Register at their meeting on the 02 March 2026 to agreed it is up to date as at March 2026.

Risk Assessment 2025-2026

•the risks of the Parish Council 2025-2026 were reviewed and approved on the 07 July 2025 Parish Council meeting to ensure that the requirements of the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (March 2025) is met.

Insurance

• the Insurance Cover for the Parish Council is with Clear Councils. The current level of insurance is sufficient for the size of the Parish Council in 2025-2026.

IT and Data Compliance

•we are pleased to report that Assertion 10 of the Governance Statement 2025-2026 is met as:

- ***staff and Councillors are using the correct email extension of.gov.uk.***
- ***an IT Policy has been produced and is displayed on the Parish Council website.***
- ***An accessibility statement is uploaded on the Parish Council and the website requirements to comply with the rules to meet the new WCAG 2.2 AA standard for website accessibility is in place.***
- ***An ICO Publication Scheme template for Parish Councils has been uploaded to the Parish Council website.***

The Parish Council should note the need for regular staff and Councillor training on Data Protection which should be recorded in the Minutes of the Parish Council.

A data audit is required to be undertaken in 2026-2027 and it is recommended that this should become a regular routine to ensure that the principles of keeping relevant and up to date data is reviewed on a regular basis.

All these requirements are now mandatory from the 01 April 2026.

Parish Council Minutes

•we checked the details of Parish Council Minutes on the Council website from April 2025 to March 2026 to record points of note for any financial approvals or decisions that affected the budget of the Parish Council and to ensure that details were correctly shown in the Financial Ledger.

Exercise of Public Rights 2025

•The 2024-2025 AGAR Annual Internal Audit Report requires the Internal Auditor to check the Council has correctly provided the proper opportunity for the Exercise of Public Rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations during 2015.
•This includes the Internal Auditor being shown evidence that the posting of the Notice on the website was done at least one clear day before the 30-working day period begins.
(Audit Note; We are pleased to report that the Parish Council have displayed the Notice correctly to comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulation 2015).

End of Year Procedures

A full check was carried out on the End of Year documentation provided by the Parish Clerk to confirm the accuracy of the details. This also included the validation of any variances of totals between 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 shown on the AGAR in Section 2 as required by the External Auditor which is over 15%.

All other information provided confirms the accuracy of the details to be shown in Section 2 of the AGAR and therefore we have signed the Internal Audit Report on the AGAR for 2025-2026.

Audit Opinion

All the internal control statements shown in the Internal Audit Report of the AGAR have been completed to show our opinion that there is an appropriate control framework in place for the Parish Council.

The Parish Council are required to adhere to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the Exercise of Public Rights to be fully completed and along with the copy of the Exemption Certificate publish the details on the Parish Council website before the 1 July 2026.

Action Required

This letter report should be circulated for the next meeting of the Parish Council to inform them of the Internal Audit work carried out. The details of this Internal Audit Report Letter should also be Minuted by the Parish Council.

Finally
As this is my last internal audit review for the Parish Council before I retire may I take the opportunity to thank you for your help and support in the time that I have provided the Internal Audit Service to the Parish Council.

I wish the Parish Council well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Light FMAAT, AATQB

Internal Auditor