

Mrs Ruth Prins BA (Hons) FCPFA

Cllr T Fisher
Strensall with Towthorpe Parish Council
Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall
Northfields
Strensall
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YO32 5XW

Thursday, 08 May 2025

Dear Cllr Fisher,

**To Members of Strensall with Towthorpe Parish Council
Internal Audit of Accounts for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2025**

FINAL REPORT

My final internal audit for 2024/25 was carried out on Wednesday 23rd April 2025. The Parish Clerk made available the paper files and a copy of the cashbook to assist with my inspection of the accounts.

I have reviewed the internal controls in place within the Council and have carried out appropriate checks and tests upon transactions within the year under review. I have also reviewed management controls and arrangements to ensure that the systems of financial and other controls over the Councils activities and operating procedures are effective and sound. The accounts have been inspected and balanced back to the AGAR ready for the AGM in May.

Progress has been made in regard to adoption of policies by the Council. The Risk Management and CCTV policies are in progress as of March 25 Council meeting.

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting all policies should be adopted based on statutory requirements.

The Asset Register has been updated and has been uploaded to the Parish Council website along with the annual accounts.

Despite the above no major matters arose from my work that would give cause for concern; I am happy to report that all internal controls are working as would be expected.

The Clerk should be commended for the clarity of the bookkeeping and records keeping.

Reviews Undertaken during both Audit Reviews

1. Bookkeeping

Detailed examinations of the cashbook, income receipts, payments and associated invoices were carried out during my reviews. The records examined were found to be complete, accurate, arithmetically correct, recorded correctly and reconciled.

Invoices and payments have been checked by 2 councillors as part of their monthly internal control checks. It is recommended that this continues.

2. Financial Regulations

The Council has formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations. A responsible finance officer (RFO) has been appointed with specific duties. On a day-to-day basis, the management of the Council's finances is one of the duties of the Clerk supported by all members of the Council. The Council remains responsible for the assessment and management of risk and the provision of good governance.

The regulations and standing orders have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure approved by the Committee and VAT appropriately accounted for and reclaimed periodically. Terms of reference for all sub committees have been approved within the year by the Parish Council.

3. Risk Assessment

All data is backed up to the cloud via Outlook, software and computers are password protected. All paper files are kept within a locked filing cabinet and a locked filing cupboard. All expenditure is passed through Council meetings as a resolution for payment. No petty cash is held by the Council. The Parish Council continues to be registered with the ICO as a data controller.

4. Budgetary Controls

The Council prepared an annual budget in December 24 and that was approved by the Council. This budget is monitored regularly and Budget versus Actuals reported to Committee meetings, with variances being explained.

5. VAT

The Council is able to recover all VAT paid provided that there are correct supporting invoices showing the VAT due. All VAT was recorded, claimed correctly and in a timely manner.

6. Income Recovery

Income is fully recovered for allotments and the cemetery. All burial fees and associated charges have been recovered using the correct rate. These fees and charges are available to the public on the website. All payments received have an associated receipt so that it can be matched to payments/deposits on the bank statements.

7. Payroll

The Clerks salary was paid in accordance with the Council's approval and PAYE and NI payments were applied accordingly and passed over to HMRC in a timely manner. No employees are enrolled onto the Pension Scheme.

8. Banking

Bank reconciliations are performed monthly with explanations of differences being noted. The year-end bank statements were reconciled to the cash book and accounts. Balances are reported to the Council monthly.

9. Asset Control

The Asset register has been reviewed during the year and reflects current values and assets.

Details of reserves held are backed up by a Reserves Policy along with explanation of the levels held. This formed part of the budget setting process. Both of these documents should continue to be reviewed at least annually.

10. Year End Procedures

The year-end processes have been reviewed and found to be correct and complete. Financial statements were produced on a receipts and payments basis and were reconciled back to the cash book and bank statements. The Annual Return was completed by the Clerk and reconciled back to the financial statements and closing balances from the previous year.

No matters arose from my work that would give cause for concern.

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Asset register should continue to be reviewed annually to ensure that it is up to date and accurate.
2. To finalise the Risk Management and CCTV policies and adopt them as a Council.
3. The Council should continue to use the sound internal controls that are currently in place to maintain the high standard of financial statements and the high level of confidence in the accounts and supporting documentation.

I would like to thank the Parish Clerk for her time and assistance before and during my audit.

Yours sincerely,