

Report to Badingham Parish Council

Internal Audit of the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2026

The primary objective of Internal Audit is to independently review, appraise and provide assurance upon the control environment, making sure that controls are mitigating the Council from increased risk exposure, and to achieve this, the internal auditor will adopt a predominantly systems-based approach to audit.

The Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026 can be summarized as follows:

Income for the year:	£23,352.66
Expenditure for the year:	£10,939.32
Precept figure:	£13,950.00
General Reserves:	£8,763.62
Earmarked Reserve:	£28,231.00

The following Internal Audit work was carried out on the adequacy of systems of internal control in accordance with the scope previously approved by the Council with particular emphasis upon the following:

- Review and assess the soundness, adequacy, effectiveness and reliability of financial and performance management systems
- Review and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of internal control arrangements and working practices and make recommendations to improve these where appropriate
- Review and assess the adequacy of procedures to ensure the Council's assets and interests are adequately protected and risks are identified and effectively managed
- Check for compliance with legislation and the Council's integrity and ethical standards, policies and procedures

Comments and any recommendations arising from the review are made below.

<p>Summary</p>	<p>The internal audit review has provided evidence of the overall adequacy of the financial arrangements in place within the council. The examination of the period-end accounts and supporting documentation has confirms that those undertaking the statutory duty of Responsible Financial Officer have satisfactory undertaken the administration of the Council’s financial affairs and produced satisfactory financial management information to enable the Council to make well-informed decisions.</p> <p>Recommendations made and/or commentary provided are to enhance the systems in place as opposed to detract from the positive assurance that can be given as to the manner in which the council’s finances are now being managed.</p> <p><i>For further information and for the year effective 1st April 2026 please refer to Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England - A Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements - March 2026.</i></p>
<p>Internal Audit Review - subject & tests carried out</p>	<p>Comments/Recommendations</p>
<p>1. Accounting Records. Examination of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting system • Cashbook • Reconciliations of cashbook 	<p>The council continues with its use of an excel spreadsheet which has enabled the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to produce reports on a Receipts and Payments basis. The cashbook shows daily entries of receipts and expenditure and the matters to which they relate.</p> <p>Spot checks were made and were found to be correct. Cash books are reconciled on a monthly basis. Receipts and expenditure transactions are referenced with a description as to the expenditure and income being incurred to ensure the integrity of data being input and processed.</p>
<p>2. Preparation of Accounts: Payment Controls Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash book entry • Supporting paperwork • Minuted approval • Review of method of payment • VAT identified, reported and reclaimed • Review of estimates, quotes and tenders • Power to Pay 	<p>A selection of random payments was cross checked against cash book, bank statement and invoices and all were found to be recorded/ authorised in accordance with Proper Practices.</p> <p>The Clerk has implemented a system whereby Council follows good practice by ensuring that, upon receipt of invoices, verification that the relevant goods or services have been received is obtained and invoices checked to ensure that the arithmetic is correct, agreed discounts have been deducted and everything is acceptable regarding reclaiming the VAT.</p> <p>A spot check of payments made under contractual terms were further analysed and all were found to be in accordance with agreed schedules and sums approved.</p>

Comment: in accordance with Model Financial Regulation 6.6, at the meeting of 20th May 2025, the council approved the list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4 (Budget and Precept) are adhered to. A list of such payments will be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

Council settles its financial transactions via direct bank transfer and has implemented a two-tier security system for payments which are settled by the BACS system. The system ensures that the instructions for each payment are signed by two authorised bank signatories following submission of payments by the RFO. The authorisation system utilised by the council during the year under review has ensured that the instructions for each payment are approved by council prior to the payment being made and signed by two of the authorised bank signatories. This segregation between those setting up online payments and those physically releasing the payments is in accordance with councils adopted Financial Regulation 6.2

Comment: the expanded use of any financial system will ensure that council follows approved practices in the budgeting, requesting, reviewing, approving and recording payments.

VAT is identified in the cash book with the overall VAT position for the year under review standing at £609.02. A VAT reclaim for the period ending 31st January (covering the period 1st November 2024 to 31st January 2026) in the sum of £1,300.77 was settled in February 2026. A portion of this related to the Village Hall. The Internal Auditor undertook sample tests to ensure that the VAT element within payments is being clearly identified and appropriately accounted for within the accounting system. For the period under review, the RFO has ensured that VAT has been appropriately identified in relation and correctly applied to the council's business and non-business activities.

Comment: the Clerk has implemented procedures to ensure that the council has complied with section 33 of the 1994 VAT Act which allows local authorities and other public bodies to recover VAT incurred on costs associated with: non-business activities, taxable business activities where the body is VAT registered (subject to the normal rules), and exempt business activities (where the input tax incurred in relation to exempt activities is considered to be insignificant).

There were no significant contracts placed during the year under review and council has

	<p>no loans.</p> <p>All payments for approval are referenced with a description as to the expenditure and references to the Power to Spend to underline the legislative framework in which the council operates.</p> <p>The cashbook allows for details of payments made under s137 to be clearly referenced in the cashbook and the Clerk ensures that payments made are in accordance with the budget set with reference to the statutory limit for such expenditure. Payments made under this power for the year under review totalled £100.00 and were within the statutory limits and deemed to be of benefit to all or some of the inhabitants of the parish.</p>
<p>3. Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders and Financial Regulations • Compliancy • Annual Review • Adherence <p>Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer</p>	<p>Council’s Standing Orders as seen on the website show a review and adoption date of 20th January 2026 and are based on the Model Standing Orders 2025 (England) as produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).</p> <p>Financial Regulations (FR), also as seen on the website, were reviewed at the meeting of 20th January 2026 and are based on the latest version as produced by NALC. The Regulations are partially tailored to the Council.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council should ensure that the regulations are fully tailored to the parish council by completing the areas within the curly brackets which indicate words, sentences or sections that can be removed if not applicable or amended to fit the council’s circumstances.</i></p> <p>The Council, in accordance with proper practices and with reference to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, has employed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) who is responsible for the financial administration of the authority. Council’s own Financial Regulation 1.5 confirms that the Clerk has been appointed as the RFO for this council and that the regulations will apply accordingly.</p>
<p>4. Risk Management. Evidence of financial risk management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of risks associated with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial Management ➤ Governance ➤ Building/ Assets • Annual Review and Minuted • Insurance in place 	<p>The Council’s Risk Management Documentation was presented for adoption by the Council at the meeting of 3rd March 2026 and covers the year 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. The register provides details of the risks associated with the functioning of a smaller authority and the measures that the Council will undertake to mitigate such risks. Council is aware that risk assessment needs to focus on the safety of the parish council’s assets and in particular its money. There is evidence that overall, the parish council has taken action to identify and assess those risks and has considered what actions or decisions it needs to take during the year to manage in order to avoid financial or</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequate ➤ Reviewed • Fidelity Guarantee Cover Insurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequate ➤ Reviewed • Internal Controls documented and regularly reviewed 	<p>reputational consequences.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council continues to ensure that it acts within the sphere of the controls as adopted and has demonstrated that in accordance with Proper Practices and with reference to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, it has in place safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money and that a regular review of the safety of the parish council's assets and in particular its money, is part of the methodical manner in which Council addresses the risks associated with the activities and services it provides.</i></p> <p>A scan of the minutes did not give rise to any unusual financial activity and there were no actions of a potentially unlawful nature being considered.</p> <p>During the year, full Council, having reviewed the renewal insurance documentation, agreed to renew with Clear Councils under a Local Councils Policy. Core cover shows the following: Public Liability £10,000,000; Employer's Liability £10,000,000 and Fidelity Guarantee Cover is £250,000 which meets the current recommended guidelines which provide that the cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants. The schedule provides clarity on those assets insured, under generic headings, relating to the municipal infrastructure within the geographical limits of the policy for which the council have the ownership or remit for insurance purposes.</p> <p><i>Comment: in accordance with Proper Practices, Council has identified its key risks and taken steps to manage them in a way which it can justify to a level which is tolerable by transferring the risk and buying in services from specialist external bodies and taking out insurance. Overall Council has understood the requirement to have in place safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money.</i></p> <p>Council formally reviewed its Internal Controls for the year under review at its meeting of 3rd March 2026. A review of the internal controls adopted provides confirmation that the specific control procedures for payments by bank transfer or other electronic means are in place and being used and that Council continues to have in place an adequate process to protect the Council against payment of invoices which may show fraudulent bank account details. Such a review continues to demonstrate that Council has taken steps to continue with the process that was in place during previous years which enables it to identify, assess and record the control mechanisms in place to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard and protect public finances.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council has ensured conformity with the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and formally reviewed the effectiveness of its system of internal control.</i></p>
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	<p>Council also shows good practice by implementing a system whereby internal control regular reviews are undertaken by a non-signatory prior to the consideration of the Internal Control Statement, thereby separating the roles of overview from that of authorisation, of the effectiveness of its system of internal control to ensure that it has mitigation measures in place to address the risks associated with the management of public finances.</p>
<p>5. Budgetary controls. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of process of setting of budget • Monitoring of budget • Reserves 	<p>Council set the annual budget to inform the legal limit of spending preauthorised by the council under the Local Government Act 1972 for the year 2025-2026 at its meeting of 29th January 2025. From paperwork seen, the budget set was in the sum of £10,000.00.</p> <p>The budget for the year 2026-2027 was submitted to and approved at the Council meeting of 12th January 2026. The minutes do not reflect the budget being proposed and adopted, merely the precept which was expected to fund the budget in full. From papers seen the budget was set at £10,924.</p> <p>Recommendation: to ensure transparency in the budgetary process followed by the council, it should evidence; by recording within the minutes, the actual budget being set alongside the reasoning for such a budget as well as the impact the precept being set would have on a Band D dwelling.</p> <p>There is evidence of regular reviews of the current year’s budget versus actual performance throughout the year as well as within the determination of the budget for the following year. Council had demonstrated that it is aware that the monitoring of the budget throughout the year is one of the recommended key stages * as to the process to be followed during the year.</p> <p><i>Comment: council receives the level of monitoring detail as specified in its own Standing Orders (17c) as the submission of such reports is vital to ensure that the council receives detailed information for currently funded as well as future projects.</i></p> <p>* key stages as to the budgetary process to be followed for the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decide the form and level of detail of the budget; • review the current year budget and spending; • determine the cost of spending plans; • assess levels of income; • bring together spending and income plans; • provide for contingencies and consider the need for reserves; • approve the budget; • confirm the precept or rates and special levies; and • review progress against the budget regularly throughout the year.

	<p>The Council on 31st March 2026 had overall reserves totalling £36,994.62. General Reserves stood at £8,763.62 with Earmarked Reserves of £28,231.00 which includes the Restricted reserve (CIL) £19,000. Council is aware of the guidance as issued by Proper Practices which states that it is regarded as acceptable for a council's general (non-earmarked revenue) reserves to be maintained at between three and twelve months of Net Revenue Expenditure and that it should ensure that the level of general reserves adopted is in accordance with its General Reserve Policy.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council might wish to consider adopting a policy which provides clarity on the level of general reserves council aspires to hold to ensure financial security and manage cash flow effectively. These reserves are not restricted in use and can be utilised to cushion against unexpected short-term problems or emergencies.</i></p> <p>There is no upper limit for Earmarked Reserves, but they should be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level subject to regular review and justification (at least annually).</p>
<p>6. Income controls. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precept • Other income 	<p>The precept for the year 2025 – 2026 was discussed and approved at the meeting of 29th January 2025 and set at £13,950 which remained the same for the previous year.</p> <p>Council received precept in the sum of £13,950 from East Suffolk Council in April and September 2025. The financial reports submitted to full Council confirms receipt to the council of the above funds being received into the council's nominated bank account.</p> <p>The precept for the year 2026 – 2027 was confirmed at the meeting of 20th January 2026 as being approved at £13,950. However, the minutes do not demonstrate the amount approved nor the impact that this would have for a Band D household. Paperwork seen suggests that the precept was kept at the same level as the prior year.</p> <p>Recommendation: council should note best practice which advises that the minutes should be expanded to reflect the increase per household per year and the ensuing Band D Property Tax Bill for the coming year.</p> <p>Spot checks on further items paid into the Council's accounts were cross checked against cashbook and bank statements. All were found to be in order within the cashbook with the Clerk providing an underlying audit trail. The council's minutes show receipt of and approval of a list of receipts occurred during a specified period, which are included within the published minutes of the council's meetings.</p> <p>During the year under review, council received CIL receipts in the sum of £ £8,646.82 (April £4,231.95 and October £4,414.87) as reported to council within its financial reports</p>

	<p>in May and November 2025. The Clerk has ensured that the financial spreadsheets are able to identify the monies received and expended for CIL projects and created an earmarked reserve in accordance with the Regulations.</p> <p>The Annual CIL Statement for the year ending 31st March 2026 was produced and signed off by the Council at its meeting of 3rd March 2026 and show retained balances of £19,038.51. Council is also aware of the need to ensure that CIL balances are reported to the District Council within the regulatory time periods and has uploaded to the council's website.</p> <p><i>Comment: council is aware that the CIL Regulations provided clarity on the timing of the reports, and by which date they should be brought into the public domain.</i></p>
<p>7. Petty cash/expenses procedure.</p>	<p>Council does not operate a petty cash system.</p>
<p>8. Payroll controls. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of payroll • PAYE/NIC system in place • Compliance with HMRC procedures • Records relating to contracts of employment 	<p>The Council, in accordance with proper practices and with reference to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, has employed an RFO who is responsible for the financial administration of the authority.</p> <p>The council's payroll service was reviewed and has been operated properly and overseen by the council as an employer. The council is not a member of a pension scheme.</p> <p>In accordance with Proper Practices, PAYE taxes and employee and employer National Insurance contributions (NIC), are calculated and recorded for every employee. Deductions are paid to HM Revenue and Customs on or before the dates prescribed.</p> <p><i>Comment: There are robust payroll arrangements in place which ensures the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and wages, and associated liabilities and as such the Council has complied with its duties under employment legislation and has met its pension obligations.</i></p> <p>Full Council approved the implementation of the NJC Pay Award and ensured the appropriate pay scales for 2025-2026 were implemented and backdated for all paid hours worked to 1st April 2025 in the October payroll.</p> <p><i>Comment: in accordance with Proper Practices, Council has ensured that the remuneration payable to all employees has been approved in advance by the Council.</i></p> <p>Council is aware of its pension responsibilities with confirmation given in the audit report for the year ending 31st March 2024, that evidence was seen of the redeclaration of compliance with the Pensions Regulator dated 6th June 2022 (council's re-enrolment dates was 16th March 2023). Council is aware that every three years an employer must put certain staff back into a pension scheme. This is known as 're-enrolment.'</p>

	<p><i>Comment: Council should ensure that there is a minute reference to demonstrate that it was complied with its legal duty as an employer and has completed the task and has submitted a re-declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator.</i></p>
<p>9. Asset control. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Register • Checks on existence of assets • Recording of fixed asset valuations • Cross checking on insurance cover 	<p>The Asset Register is held on a spreadsheet and covers those items listed under insurance and within the parish council’s remit for maintenance and ownership.</p> <p>The Asset Register, as seen during the internal audit review currently stands at £26,279.49 which shows movement in terms of acquisitions to that declared at year-end of 31st March 2025. The register details assets held by the council which have been defined as Fixed Assets and the approved itemised list will form the basis of Box 9 of the Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Council formally approved the asset register as submitted at its meeting of 3rd March 2026.</p> <p>The Asset Register was reviewed during the internal audit review, and it is noted that council has insurance cover for its assets to a fixed value for those assets based within its territorial confines. The assets within the register have recorded values that are either the original purchase cost (where known), an estimated cost or an insurance value. <i>Comment: Council has noted the requirement for smaller authorities to record each asset at its original purchase cost.</i></p> <p>As advised in the internal audit report, council has included the Village Hall within its asset register and regularised the position as to ownership of the Village Hall. Council has also insured that both the Pocket Park and land in front of the Public House have been incorporated within the register thereby denoting ownership and/or responsibility. For all other assets, the original purchase cost, as known at the time of first recording on the asset register, has been recorded as the current value and has remained unchanged. <i>Comment: council is aware that this method of asset valuation should be applied consistently from year to year. If council materially enhances an asset, then the recorded asset value may vary. Council has noted this requirement and has ensured that the valuation process adopted is set out and recorded in its asset register.</i></p> <p>From a review of the asset register alongside the insurance cover provided, confirmation is given of the overall adequacy of cover of insurance for the ensuing year. Appropriate insurance is in place under generic category headings based on policy declared values.</p>
<p>10. Bank reconciliations Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank reconciliations 	<p>Bank reconciliations are completed on a regular basis and reconcile with the cash sheets. The Clerk has implemented a system whereby Council has taken steps to ensure that it can evidence that it is working in accordance with guidance issued within Proper</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashbook • Bank statements 	<p>Practices which state that bank reconciliations should be prepared routinely, subject to independent scrutiny and signed by members with a regular minute to record the activity undertaken. Approval of the bank reconciliation by the authority or the chair of the committee or another authority nominee is not only good practice but is also a safeguard for the Responsible Financial Officer and will fulfil one of the authority's internal control objectives.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council is aware that, in accordance with Proper Practices, the bank reconciliation is a key tool for management as it assists with the regular monitoring of cash flows which aids decision-making, particularly when there are competing priorities. In accordance with Proper Practices, council has implemented a system whereby the monthly reconciled bank accounts are presented to Full Council.</i></p> <p>Bank balances as of the date of the internal audit review agree with the year-end balances and stood at £36,994.62 across the accounts held in the council's name as verified from statements and the cashbook.</p>
<p>11. Year-end procedures.</p> <p>Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate accounting procedures used • Bank Statements and Cash Book agree • Has the appropriate end of year AGAR documents been completed? • Where an authority certified itself exempt in 2025 did it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt? 	<p>Accounts are produced on a receipts and payments basis, and all found to be in order.</p> <p>The end of year account was presented for the internal auditor review and there is a clear financial trail from records to presented accounts. Year-end balances agree with cash book and bank reconciliations and stand at £36,994.62. The brought forward balance for the year was £24,581.28, with income stated received for the year totalling £23,355.66 with expenditure totalling £10,939.32 leaving a carried forward balance of £36,994.62.</p> <p>As Council is a smaller authority with gross income and expenditure not exceeding £25,000 it may claim exemption from a limited assurance review.</p> <p>If an exemption is to be claimed, the council will be required to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Form 2. The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR) were completed in draft form, and the Internal Auditor has fully completed the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.</p> <p>For the year ending 31st March 2025, council was not able to claim exemption from a limited assurance review as it did not meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gross income and gross expenditure are both below £25k; and • no public interest report/statutory recommendation/advisory notice/judicial review/application to court re unlawful item of account has been issued by its external auditor in the prior year; and • the reporting year is not one of the authority's first three years of existence.

<p>12. Compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information uploaded to the council's website 	<p>Council is aware that with gross income and expenditure under £25,000 it will be required to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 for smaller authorities. For the year ending 31st March 2025, council has ensured that all items listed below can be viewed on the public accessible website. For the year ending 31st March 2026, council is aware that it should ensure that the following are published on a public website in accordance with the dates prescribed by the relevant regulations (not later than 1 July):</p> <p>Documents to be uploaded are as follows: Internal Audit Report; List of Councillors and Responsibilities; Items of Expenditure Above £100 including recoverable and non-recoverable VAT; End of Year Accounts; Annual Governance Statement; Asset Register; Agendas of Meetings; Associated Papers and Minutes - all of which should be published in accordance with the prescribed timescales as set out in the Transparency code for smaller authorities – December 2014.</p> <p><i>Comment: it is noted that the Expenditure exceeding £100 has been uploaded to the website prior to the internal audit review. Council is advised that salary items are exempt from publication on this form.</i></p>
<p>13. Period for the Exercise of Public Rights set in accordance with the Audit & Accounts Regulations of 2015 in relation to the year 2024-2025 Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates set for 2024-25 	<p>The internal auditor is able to confirm that the period for the public rights exercise covered the period 3rd June to 24th July 2025 with the notice being dated 3rd June 2025.</p> <p><i>Comment: within the Annual Internal Audit Report, internal control objective test M requires the internal auditor to establish whether the parish council correctly provided for the exercise and published a copy of the required "Public Notice" by ensuring that it clearly identified the statutory 30 working day period when the Authority's records are available for public inspection. This is evidenced by the notice on the website which contains the period for the exercise of public right; details of the manner in which the documents can be inspected; the name and address of the external auditor and the provisions as contained under section 25 and section 27 of the Act.</i></p> <p>Recommendation: Council should note that for the year 2024-2025 the notice was incorrectly completed. The date of announcement must be one day prior to the date of the commencement of public rights. Council should ensure that the correct dates are given for the year 2025-2026.</p>
<p>14. Have the publication requirements been met in accordance with the Audit & Accounts Regulations of 2015. Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication requirements for the year 2024-2025 	<p>The Internal Auditor is able to confirm that the Council has complied with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for smaller authorities with income and expenditure not exceeding £25,000, as it has published the following for the year 2024 - 2025 on a publicly accessible website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Exemption • Annual Internal Audit Report • Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR • Section 2 – Annual Accounting Statements of the AGAR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights • Analysis of variances • Bank reconciliation – year-end <p><i>Comment: council is aware that all documentation relating to the year ending 31st March 2026 must be uploaded to the council’s website prior to the commencement of the period of public rights and prior to 1st July 2026 (whichever comes first).</i></p>
<p>15. Compliance with Assertion 10 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email management • IT Policy • Compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2AA • Compliance with Data Protection Legislation • ICO registration • Compliance with publication requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 	<p>Assertion 10 has now been added to clarify data compliance (previously covered under Assertion 3). To warrant a positive response, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain • Meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. • Must publish documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable). • Must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. • Must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection. • Must have an IT policy. <p>Council currently operates with the website: https://badinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/ The site supports a secure and digitally managed email system. There is a dedicated gov.uk email addresses for the Clerk.</p> <p>Council has not adopted a separate Information Technology Policy but has expanded its Data Protection and Information Management Policy to cover the use of IT equipment for authority business for both Staff and Councillors.</p> <p><i>Comment: council is aware that such provisions must provide clarity on the use of IT equipment for authority business which explains how all involved with the authority - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This should also relate to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.</i></p> <p>The Council has published a website accessibility statement on the council operated website detailing the technical information of the website along with the methods used for testing the website; the steps being taken to improve accessibility and how the site is being improved. The site has been tested against the Web Content Accessibility</p>

	<p>Guidelines version 2.2 AA Standard (on 14th February 2025). The Accessibility Statement was prepared on 21st February 2025 and updated on 28th September 2025.</p> <p>Council has taken steps to ensure compliancy with the GDPR requirements and has produced policies detailing the manner in which the parish council will protect and handle information relating to personal information. The policies provide clear responsibilities and obligations of the council in respect of the collecting, using and protecting of personal information in accordance with the provisions of the GDPR and has documented the measures that the council will undertake to ensure adequate provision for the preservation of documents, books and papers belonging to the parish. Council has further adopted policies which detail the procedures for dealing with subject access and the manner in which personal information will be protected from data breaches.</p> <p><i>Comment: to ensure continued compliance with the data protection regulations, council is advised to conduct regular data audits to identify the personal information held by the council, the manner in which it is held and the lawful basis in which the information is being processed.</i></p> <p>As a Data Controller, all local authorities are required to register with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.</p> <p>The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, approved by the ICO, and to publish information covered by this scheme. Council’s scheme was reviewed and updated in September 2025 and was available to view on the council operated website.</p> <p><i>Comment: Whilst Council is aware that this is a requirement under the Act to publish a scheme which will set out the Council’s commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information and that it should be annually reviewed, it should seek to ensure that the published scheme is fully tailored to the parish council.</i></p>
<p>16. Internal Audit: Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of Previous Internal Audit Reports • Review of internal audit • Review of effectiveness of internal audit • Appointment of internal auditor 	<p>The Internal Audit Report from the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the period ending 31st March 2025 was received and approved by full Council at a meeting of 20th May 2025.</p> <p>The following recommendations were raised in the report and confirmation is given that all have been actioned during the year under review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusion of a proxy or original costs of the value of the village hall within the

	<p>asset register</p> <p>2. Inclusion of the analysis of variance between the current year and prior year within the suite of year-end financial documents</p> <p>In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, a review of the scope of the council’s internal audit arrangements, including their effectiveness, was covered within the Internal Control Statement as approved (meeting of 3rd March 2026). <i>Comment: council has noted the requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, that it must review the terms of reference and effectiveness of internal audit and demonstrate that it has understood that the role of internal audit is to evaluate and report on the adequacy of the system on internal control.</i></p> <p>The appointment of the person to act as the parish council’s independent internal auditor for the year 2025-2026 was approved at the council meeting of 3rd March 2026. <i>Council has understood the requirement to ensure that there is an appointed person to provide assurance that the financial and management systems of the council are sound and adequate and internal control arrangements are efficient and effective.</i></p>
<p>17. External Audit Examination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of External Audit Report 	<p>The External Audit Report and Certificate for the year ending 31st March 2025 having been received by the Council in August 2025 does not appear to have been submitted to Full Council. <i>Comment: Council should note Regulation 20 (in part) which states that the annual audit letter received from the auditor must be considered by the authority and published (including publication on the authority’s website) and to permit copies to be purchased.</i></p> <p>There were no matters that came to the attention of the external auditor which gave cause for concerns that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. The certificate notes that in the prior year, the authority was exempt from their review and that that did not review any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR.</p> <p>The Internal Auditor is able to reconfirm that the external auditor report and certificate along with the conclusion of the external audit have been published on the Council’s website. Details as to how copies may be purchased have also been included. <i>Comment: in order to comply with the Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Council has demonstrated that it is aware that, as soon as it is reasonably practical after the conclusion of the audit, it should publish a statement saying that the audit has been concluded, giving the details of the public’s rights of inspection</i></p>

	<i>under section 25 of the 2014 Act (Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014) and saying where and when those rights may be exercised.</i>
18. Responsibilities as a Sole Trustee	The Council has Sole Trustee responsibilities for the Badingham Village Hall Charity (BVHC) (Registration no. 304703). The Charity Commission currently records Badingham Parish Council as the Sole Trustee with a Date of Appointment as 19 th December 2022 with contact details of the Parish Clerk displayed. The accounts for the year ending 31 st March 2025 were received by the Charity Commission on 26 th January 2026 within the filing deadline.
19. Additional comments. Examination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Meeting • Election of Chair and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office • Register of Interests • Code of Conduct • Minutes • Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 	<p>Council held its Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 20th May 2025 at which the Chair and Vice-Chair for the coming year were elected as the first items on the agenda, in accordance with legislation.</p> <p>In accordance with section 83(4) of the 1972 Act, Council has ensured that the Chair, on being elected to office, has signed a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of another councillor or the clerk.</p> <p>Evidence was seen on the District Council’s website for the register of Interests for all current parish councillors with a direct link from the Parish Council’s website to that of the District Council for access to the Register of Interests.</p> <p>In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 para 41 (1), Council is aware that the loose-leaf minutes and associated documents of the parish council should be initialled and signed by the person chairing the meeting at the time of signature which ensures their lawful providence.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council has noted that LGA 1972 Schedule 12, paragraph 41 allows for the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of a local authority to be recorded on loose leaves provided that they are consecutively numbered. Council has implemented such a system.</i></p> <p>The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 were enacted on 5th August and came into force on 6th August 2014. These regulations allow for the filming and recording of Council meetings (and other specified public bodies) and provide for access to records (e.g. of decisions made by officers).</p> <p><i>Comment: Council has reviewed the provisions of the 2014 Regulations to ensure that, by publishing a range of information online, it is compliant with the provisions of the Act.</i></p>

Victoria S Waples

Date of Internal Audit Review: *finalised 10.05.26*

Date of Internal Audit Report: 10.05.2026

Victoria S Waples, CiLCA, BA(Hons), PSLCC
37 Queenscliffe Road, Ipswich, IP2 9AS