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LIGHTATOUCH

7 Hodder Close, Chandlers Ford, Hants, SO53 4QD.
Tel: 07762 780605 Email: Tim.Light1@hotmail.co.uk

21 May 2021

The Parish Clerk
Hinton Blewett Parish Council
Litton Lane
Hinton Blewett
Bristol BS39 5AY

Dear Jo

Hinton Blewett Parish Council Internal Audit Report Letter for Council 2020/2021

December 2020 –March 2021

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 2020-21 Governance and Accountability Annual Return (AGAR).

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

- ‘Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners’ Guide (England)’ 2020
- The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended).

The Covid 19 pandemic has delayed further visits taking place in 2020/2021, but consultations have continued by video link or telephone conference calls with the Clerk. The Clerk has also provided back-up information from RBS Alpha software for the period December 2020 to March 2021 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 from the Council’s website.

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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 2020/2021 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 2020/2021 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 30 November 2020 had been brought forward accurately.
- any payments and un-banked income as at 31 March 2021.
- all direct credits, standing orders, transfers were checked and accounted for the period 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021.
- all income was banked and agreed to bank statements for the period 1 December 2020 – 31 March 2021.
- bank reconciliations for the bank account had been carried out between 1 December 2020 – 31 March 2021, and totals agreed to those shown in the Cash Book.

Income and Expenditure

- all un-presented payment information as at 31 March 2021 was confirmed and that the details are accurate to the records held by Parish Council.
- test checks of the Cash Book totals for December 2020 – March 2021 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 was received from HMRC in January 2021 for £428.33 relating to purchases between November 2019 and October 2020.

Asset Register

- We confirmed with the Parish Clerk that she has reviewed the Assets Register and has now brought this up to date as at 31 March 2021.

Parish Council Minutes

- we checked the details of Parish Council Minutes on the Council website from December 2020 to March 2021 to record points of note for any financial approval or decision that affected the budget of the Parish Council and to ensure that details were correctly shown in the Financial Ledger.

Website Accessibility Regulation 2018

- the Website Accessibility Statement has been uploaded and displayed on the Council Website to comply with the requirements of the Website Accessibility Regulation 2018 that was introduced on the 23 September 2020.

Exercise of Public Rights 2020

- The 2020/2021 AGAR 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 2020/2021.

- 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 Regulations 2015).

Transparency Code Regulation 2015

- As the Parish Council has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 the Internal Auditor is asked to check that the Council have published information on their website that is in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Transparency Code Regulation 2015.

(Audit Note: We are pleased to report that the Parish Council have published the required information on their website to ensure that they are compliant with the Transparency Code 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 2019/20 and 2020/21 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 Annual Internal Audit Report on the AGAR for 2020/2021.

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 2021.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Light FMAAT - Internal Auditor