

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Ecton Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Mrs TL Charteress	Date of report:	14 th May 2025
Year ending:	31 March 2025	Date audit carried out:	12 th May 2025

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 council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chair of the Council:

Thank you very much to the Parish Clerk for supplying me with the information I requested to carry out this Annual Internal Audit. I have spoken with the Clerk, in person via Teams and conducted the audit remotely.

Results

The work completed is identified in the table below and action required is highlighted:

Area of Work	Observations/Points
Adoption of Policies	A review the council’s policies was conducted at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2024, and a resolution was passed to adopt them on mass. New Financial Regulations were adopted at the annual meeting in May 2024 A Scheme of Delegation was agreed as per my recommendation in a previous Internal Audit Report
Accounting Records	The Accounts were properly maintained during the financial year, and the correct carry forward figure was rolled over
Asset Register	The Asset Register appears to be an accurate reflection of council owned assets NOTE: I cannot see from the Minutes where this was agreed by council

Bank Balances	Bank balances are reported regularly at council meetings and Minuted
Bank reconciliations	Bank reconciliations were reviewed and confirmed to be done on a regular basis with due care and attention and were reported to full council. Bank balances were confirmed to statements as at the 31 st of March 2025
Budget	The council started the process for the agreement of the Budget at the November meeting. NOTE: The January 2025 full council meeting states the amount of the Precept agreed but does not formally agree a budget. There should be two separate resolutions, one for the budget and secondly the other for the agreement of the Precept demand The budget is shown as an appendix to the Minutes
Earmarked Reserves	There is no requirement for earmarked reserves
Insurance	The Insurance policy was discussed at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2024 and the council resolved to appoint Zurich as their insurers for the next 3 years. The insurance payment of £648.63 was agreed.
Internal Control	Internal Control is being completed regularly and reported to council
Minutes of Meetings	Minutes were reviewed and were found to be in good order.
PAYE & Pensions	Paye & Pensions were tested and found to be in good order. The council use a payroll provider. Payments to HMRC are being paid regularly through the council's bank account and the council makes an annual payment into the Clerk's pension
Payments	Payments followed due process and have been accounted for correctly
Precept	The council agreed the Precept Demand of £16,335 at the January 2025 full Council meeting
Procurement	The council agreed to extend a village maintenance contract with existing contractors
Risk Assessments	The council's Risk Assessments were adopted at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2024
VAT return	The balance as at 31 st March 2025. No errors were observed
Website	NOTE: The website appears to be a village one rather than council specific. When trying to access information for audit purposes the page advised it was under construction and the page detailing the Scheme of Delegation wouldn't open. A Parish Council must maintain a website so it can publish data in line with the Transparency Code and the website should be .gov or .org
Year-end procedures	Year-end procedures were carried out in the correct manner.

Summary

In my opinion the Council's books and records are in very good order and follow due process in most elements.

I wish the Council a very successful 2025/2026.

Yours sincerely,

Tina Charteress

Mrs TL Charteress
Internal Auditor to the Council
07818 084231
tcharteress@gmail.com

The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2024	Year ending 31 March 2025
1. Balances brought forward	23,048	19,463
2. Annual precept	16,335	16,335
3. Total other receipts	3,485	8,031
4. Staff costs	4,126	4,909
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	19,279	18,215
7. Balances carried forward	19,463	20,705
8. Total cash and investments	19,463	20,705
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	123,897	129,494
10. Total borrowings	0	0

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2024)*. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils and it sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed. A copy of the guide is available for free download from:

<https://northantscalc.gov.uk/practitioners-guide>.