

OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019-20

I am pleased to report to Members of the Parish Council that I have completed my internal audit of the Parish Council's records for 2019-20 and have been able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report for the 2019-20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Members should be aware that the audit tests that I undertook during the audit cannot be relied on to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor to disclose breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud which may have taken place and which it is the responsibility of the Members of the Council to guard against through the Parish Council's internal control procedures.

Members will be pleased to know that I did not find anything major in my financial audit to report and that I found the record keeping to be of a good standard and the Parish Council's approach to the management of risks to be sound. As a result of my audit and my discussions with your Clerk I was able to answer 'YES' to all the relevant questions contained in the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2019-20.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Clerk for the assistance given to me in the conduct of the audit that took place remotely on 26 July and 20 August 2020.

PREVIOUS AUDITS:

External auditor 2018-19:

The external audit report for 2018-19 was considered at the meeting on 3 September 2019. There were no issues requiring action as the only comment made was a disclaimer from the auditor relating to the previous year (2017-18) in which the Council had certified itself as exempt.

Internal auditor 2018-19:

Nothing to follow up.

FINDINGS THIS AUDIT:

During the audit I carried out sufficient work to enable me to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report which included reading the minutes and checking the accounting records. In view of the difficulties presented by covid-19 I have not reviewed any of the other records or policies.

I found the financial records to be accurate and up to date. There were no unexplained entries in the bank reconciliations.

In setting its budget for 2020-21 the Council has not complied fully with the requirements of s49A Local Government Finance Act 1992 which mandates certain calculations. The budget as adopted did not include calculations of expected income (apart from the precept) nor transfers to or from reserves. It should also be noted that the result of the s49A calculations is the net council tax requirement i.e. the precept as S41(2) of the same Act orders that the s49A calculation is the precept.

In February 2020 the Council resolved that there would be no Annual Parish Meeting this year. This is something the Council has no power to decide as it is a statutory requirement that the Annual Parish Meeting takes place each year (Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 part III para 14).

At its extra-ordinary meeting on 23 March 2020 the Council delegated decision making powers to the Clerk with riders about consulting with councillors. As a back up, in the event that the Clerk was unavailable, the Council delegated emergency powers to the Chair, again with a rider about consulting other councillors. This latter decision is unlawful as the Council cannot delegate any decision to a single councillor or to a group of councillors not constituted as a committee or sub committee. It can delegate only to a committee, sub committee, an officer or another authority.

I have nothing further to report.

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**Lionel Robbins
Independent Internal Auditor
20 August 2020**