

Keith Robertson

Internal Audit Services

BREDE PARISH COUNCIL

Internal Audit Report 2025-26

Introduction

In accordance with the Internal Audit Plan, Controls and Procedures have been tested. The tests were to the standards and practices defined in the Governance and Accountability Guide for Smaller Authorities 2025 and meet the needs of the Council. I confirm that I do not have any role within the Council and have carried out my duties without bias.

The audit was completed on 13th April 2026 at the Clerk's office. The audit confirmed that the financial management and internal controls are good with no issues that require noting on the annual return.

Internal Audit Review 2025-26

A. Appropriate Accounting Records.

- A.1** The cash book is held in Excel. The data held for each transaction is correct; the cash book and ledger is arithmetically correct and regularly balanced. VAT is properly accounted for. Financial reports produced agree to the financial records.
- A.2** Expenditure Approval. All of the items chosen in the sample of payments from the cash book were supported by invoices and VAT was correctly accounted for. The invoices were initialled to confirm seen by Cllrs. Expenditure authorisation is minuted and refers to payments detailed in the minutes.

B. Financial Regulations, documentation and approvals.

- B.1** The Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations were reviewed in 2025-26. Sample checks confirm the FR and SO are properly applied.
- B.2** Agendas & Minutes are sent out in time are well presented.
- B.3** VAT reclaims were correct as sampled in the audit.
- B.4** Samples for the approval of major projects delivered in the period confirmed that the correct procedures were followed.

C. Risk Assessment

- C.1** A formal risk register is held, up to date and adequate.
- C.2** Internal Audit Effectiveness. Controls are good and properly applied.
- C.3** Insurance – The Parish Council's Insurance cover is in total adequate to cover asset values listed in the asset register.

D. Budgeting & Precept

- D.1** Budgetary Control – The annual budget prepared in support of the precept was tested and is adequate and meets the audit standards. Receipts, payments and reserves are all considered for the forecast and the budget year.
- D.2** Reporting. Actual income and expenditure is reported and is compared to the budget with actual data agreeing to the accounts. Monthly data is also reported. Reserve balances are reported.
- D.3** Income – The precept recorded in the minutes agrees to the Council Tax authority's notification

E. Receipts

E.1 Income is primarily from the Precept, Grants and CIL and is received by bank transfer and properly accounted for.

F. Petty Cash – There is no petty cash system operated with no petty cash held.

G. Employee Costs

G.1 Staff Wages – The Clerk prepares the payroll using the moneysoft payroll software. The Clerk is the only employee.

G.2 The Clerk has a signed contract of employment. Changes to terms and pay rates are agreed by the Council. Tests confirmed this in this audit.

G.3 Salary and NHI/Tax payments are presented to Councilors along with a list of payments for approval at Council meetings with the relevant printed documents from the payroll system. Samples for payments reviewed in this audit for salary, NHI, Tax and Pension were correct and agreed to the financial records and payroll data.

H. Assets

H.1 An Asset register is maintained. The cost values logged in the register agrees with the AGAR 2025-26.

H.2 Asset values stated on the register broadly agree to the policy schedules and are adequate.

H.3 Noted that Village Hall is listed as an asset (custodian trustee) but is insured by the Village Hall management. Insurance cover is adequate.

I. Bank Reconciliations.

I.1 Bank Reconciliations are completed on a monthly basis and samples audited were correct. Statements are presented to the Cllrs signing the bank rec who also initials the statement as seen. The minutes records approval. The Bank statements and reconciliations as at year end were checked and were correct.

J. Accounting Statements.

J.1 The accounts are maintained on a receipts and payments basis and agree to the financial reports and the Annual Return.

J.2 There is an audit trail through the financial records with all items sampled being properly reported and approved

J.3 Reserves total £79.1K. Earmarked reserves are £71.8K including £17.0K of CIL. General reserves being £7.3K. A large VAT refund in early 2026-27 will restore general funds to the level acceptable to the Council.

K. Limited Assurance Review Exemption. The Council did not exempt itself in 2024-25

L. Transparency Code. The Council complied with the regulations

M. Exercise of Public Rights. The Notice of Public rights was correctly published on the Council's website for 2024-25 in 2025-26.

N. AGAR Publications 2024-25. The Council complied with the requirements.

O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.

O.1 The Council has a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, has an IT policy, and the website is compliant with regulations.

P. Trust Funds. The Council is a Custodian Trustee of the Village Hall and does not manage any trust funds or the management of the Hall.

It is noted that the figures have been produced by the Clerk in accordance with the requirements and all supporting documents have been produced for the Internal Auditor. The Clerk's co-operation aided considerably the work of this internal audit. Thank you.

Keith Robertson FCMA
Internal Auditor
14th April 2025