

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council – 2024/2025

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and the guidance and instruction in the Practitioners Guide 2024. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £224,620.08 Expenditure: £238,624.04 Reserves: £332,256.73

2025 AGAR Completion:

Section One: **Not completed at the time of audit**

Section Two: **Yes (draft figures) – to be approved by council**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025: **Yes**

Certificate of Exemption: **No**

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

All were found to be in order. LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts.

The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced. It is noted that the Council use the Scribe accounting software with the additional allotment and cemetery packages.

The Council operates online banking. The last cheque for the Cemetery account was No. 101310 dated 25/11/2020 and No. 104168 dated 20/1/2020 for the current account.

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Tenders
Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **16/1/2025 (Ref: 6)**

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **11/7/2024 (Ref: 7)**

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Recommendation: *When next reviewing Standing Orders, to update SO 18.c in line with the new Procurement value of £30,000 inclusive of VAT (as per Financial Regulation 5.7).*

VAT reclaimed during the year: Yes
Registered: No

Submission Period:	Amount:
<i>01/04/2023-1/04/2024</i>	<i>£14,569.34</i>
<i>01/04/2024-31/03/2025</i>	<i>£22,496.91</i>

General Power of Competence: No

Policy Review Schedule in place: Yes

The Council had one tender, for the Kelvedon Sensory Garden, during the year that exceeded the £30,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold. The tender was compliant with the requirement to advertise on Contract Finder.

The Council reviewed the following documents during the year of audit:

6/3/2025

- Allotment Tenancy Agreement (Ref: 8.a)*

6/2/2025

- Environment and Services Committee – Terms of Reference (Ref: 7.a)*
- Community Engagement Committee – Terms of Reference (Ref: 7.b)*
- Planning and Transport Committee – Terms of Reference (Ref: 7.c)*

16/1/2025

- Code of Conduct (Ref: 6.b)*
- Model Publication Scheme (Ref: 6.c)*
- Biodiversity Policy (Ref: 6.d)*

12/12/2024

- TV Screen Policy (Ref: 9)*

7/11/2024

- Civility and Respect Pledge (Ref: 8)*

15/8/2024

- Annual review of all policies (Ref: 7)*

9/5/2024

- Playground Risk Management (Ref: 12)*

Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council
Compliance with Data Protection regulations

Risk Assessment document in place: Yes
Data Protection registration: Yes Ref: ZA105690
Expiry: 22/3/2026

Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulations have changed and the new Regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. It is likely that this will affect the way in which the Council handles its data. Due to the financial risk associated with the General Data Protection Regulations, the Council have included this in their Risk Assessment.

Privacy Policy published: Yes

Link: <https://rushmerestandrew.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/council-policies/>

Insurance was in place for the year of audit (valid 1/2/2024 – 31/1/2025) with a review being undertaken at a meeting held on 12/12/2023 (Ref: 6.c). The Risk Assessment was reviewed at a meeting held on 15/8/2024 (Ref: 7.gi). Internal controls were reviewed at a meeting held on 15/8/2024 (Ref: 7.w).

Statement of Internal Controls in place: Yes 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.e).

The Council have effective internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Bank signatories were reviewed at a meeting held on 16/1/2025 (Ref: 5.d) and 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.e).

The annual play area inspection has been undertaken during the year (Ref: 12/9/2024 - 8).

Fidelity Cover: £500,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Transparency

Under the **Transparency code for smaller authorities**, smaller councils with income/expenditure under £25,000 should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

Smaller Council: No

Website: <https://rushmerestandrew.onesuffolk.net/>

The Council is not subject to the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller Councils. The Transparency Code for Councils with a turnover exceeding £200,000 is not covered as part of the Internal Audit.

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Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 15** councils must publish on their website:

External audit report

2024 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes

2024 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes

2024 Annual Return, Section Three Published – Yes

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations** councils must publish on their website:

Notice of period for the exercise of public rights

Published – Yes

Period of Exercise of Public Rights

Publication Date: *2/6/2024* Start Date: *3/6/2024* End Date: *12/7/2024*

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** council are required to display AGARs for the five years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 on their website.

The Council have met the publication requirements.

Budgetary controls supporting documents

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and

Precept: £136,200 (2025-2026)

Date: 12/12/2024 (Ref: 6.b)

Precept: £126,300 (2024-2025)

Date: 14/12/2023 (Ref: 8.b)

Effective budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored monthly during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and a sample of income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Allotment fees were reviewed at a meeting held on 6/3/2025 (Ref: 8.b) and on 12/9/2024 (Ref: 6) alongside allotment deposits. The Council is aware that allotment holders require 12 months' notice of any changes.

Cemetery fees were reviewed at a meeting held on 10/10/2024 (Ref: 9) and Neighbourhood Watch hall hire fees were reviewed at a meeting held on 15/8/2024 (Ref: 13).

Petty Cash

Associated books and established system in place

A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork. No Petty Cash held.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment and pensions

PAYE System in place: **Yes**
Employer's Reference: **245/MZ37472**
P60s issued: **Yes**

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Supporting paperwork is in place and P60s have been produced as part of the year end process.

Eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme. The last date of re-declaration of compliance was 19/4/2023. The next due date is 19/4/2026.

It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 12/12/2024 (Ref: 11) where the Clerk's salary was increased by 1 SCP due to successfully completing the CiLCA qualification. A further review was undertaken at a meeting held on 7/11/2024 (Ref: 12). The Parish Handyman's salary and the Registrar of Burials salary were reviewed at a meeting held on 6/6/2024 (Ref: 17 & 18).

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place with a review being undertaken at a meeting held on 6/3/2025 (Ref: 6.c). Values are recorded at cost value. The total value of assets are recorded at £195,820. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.

Bank Reconciliation

Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Bank Balances at 31 March were confirmed as:

<i>Barclays Current</i>	<i>xxxx9681</i>	<i>£36,418.17</i>
<i>Barclays BP</i>	<i>xxxx1224</i>	<i>£243,637.42</i>
<i>Barclays Current (Cemetery)</i>	<i>xxxx9673</i>	<i>£46,214.57</i>

The Council had no outstanding loans at the year end.

Reserves

General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council have adequate general reserves (£67,980.95) and have identified earmarked reserves of £246,772.28 and capital reserves of £17,503.50 in their year end accounts. Earmarked reserves were considered as part of the budgeting process (Ref: 12/12/2024 – 6.c).

Year-end procedures

Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

It is noted that the Council have moved from a Receipts and Payments accounting basis to Income and Expenditure. End of year accounts for 20205 are prepared on an Income & Expenditure basis and the 2024 accounts have been restated in the 2025 AGAR. Creditors and Debtors are identified within the year end accounts.

Local Council Tax Support Grant is excluded from Box 2: **NA**

Balance Sheet is correct: **Yes**

Sole Trustee

The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

The 2024 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.d).

A review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was carried out on 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.e).

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.e).

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2024 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 9/5/2024 (Ref: 11.b & c).

The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 10/10/2024 (Ref: 8.c).

There were no matters arising from the External Audit.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 9/5/2024. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for their assistance during the course of the audit work and the quality and presentation of the documentation provided for the audit.

**Heather Heelis**

Heelis & Lodge
28 April 2025

HEELIS&LODGE

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www.heelisandlodge.co.uk

INVOICE

To:

Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council
Parish Office
Tower Hall
5 Broadlands Way
Rushmere St Andrew
Ipswich IP4 5SU

Invoice No: HL9552
Date: 28 April 2025

Details	Quantity	Amount (£)	Total (£)
To carry out Internal Audit for Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 Banding £200,001 - £300,000	1	400.00	400.00
Total			400.00

Please make cheques payable to: Heelis & Lodge

Terms – 14 days

Bank Details: Account 02539349 **Sort Code 09-01-50**

NB Change to bank account details

Thank you.

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