

# Internal Audit Report

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

Name of council:	Hargrave Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Caroline Holgate	Date of report:	21 April 2023
Year ending:	31 March 2023	Date audit carried out:	17 April 2023

*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 Chairman of the Council:

I met with Jenny Hodgson, the Clerk/RFO, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, via Zoom, to carry out the year end audit of the Council. Prior to this meeting, Ms Hodgson provided me with all relevant year-end documentation.

The Council's new website went live in early 2023 – this is easy to navigate and contains all relevant information to meet audit criteria. I was able to review a well ordered and easily accessible set of documents. A review of the minutes has not revealed any unusual activity.

The Council is subject to the requirements of the Transparency Code, and I was able to find all expected information published on the website, either as separate documents, or within Council minutes.

The General Power of Competence has been adopted.

The precept is £7,500 which has not increased for 2022/23. A budget process has been followed and the Council have considered their reserves in this process.

Reserves have been identified as high, although these are adequately accounted for as Ear Marked Reserves for future land purchase.

A review of direct debit payment arrangements was undertaken in November, in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations. Policies are reviewed regularly and in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Having reviewed all available information, I am satisfied that effective systems of control are in place and have signed the AGAR 2022/23 accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHolgate', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Caroline Holgate  
Internal Auditor to the Council  
07766 334541  
clholgate@hotmail.com

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

	Year ending 31 March 2022	Year ending 31 March 2023
1. Balances brought forward	15,897	18,083
2. Annual precept	7,500	7,500
3. Total other receipts	3,294	1,204
4. Staff costs	3,390	3,860
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	5,218	3,953
7. Balances carried forward	18,083	18,974
8. Total cash and investments	18,083	18,974
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	13,740	13,849
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 (2022)*. 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://www.northantscalc.com/uploads/practitioners-guide-2022-8.pdf>