

# Internal Audit Report

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

Name of council:	Cosgrove Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Kate Houlihan	Date of report:	23 04 2024
Year ending:	31 March 2024	Date audit carried out:	23 04 2024

*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:

I carried out the year end Audit on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April and I would like to thank the Clerk for her time, and for supplying me with documentation prior to and following our meeting. This report should be read in conjunction with my interim audit report of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

The Council has addressed all the issues raised in my Interim Audit.

- The website is well ordered and up to date and is now easily found from a Google search. I understand the council is also considering a move to a .gov domain name for website and email. This is strongly recommended in the 2024 Practitioners Guide. Financial assistance and support are currently available for this.
- Cemetery Fees have been reviewed and considered by the Council, in setting the new fees the council carefully considered the needs of the village and affordability.

- The risk assessment was reviewed and adopted in February 2024. The Clerk has begun the CiLCA training, and all core policies are being reviewed as part of this.

During the audit process I tested aspects of the Council's internal controls as required for the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) section of the Annual Return Form 3.

All the documents relating to the prior year's AGAR were published in line with audit requirements.

Throughout the year the council has reviewed progress against budget, and this is minuted on a monthly basis. However, when setting the precept for 2023-2024, the council wrongly excluded the public and press from the meeting. Public and press should be able to remain in the meeting when the budget is discussed. I have therefore answered NO to assertion D on the AIAR. However, I have already noted that the council followed the correct process when setting the budget for 2024-2025, so this should not be an issue for future years.

Suitable internal controls are in place and members review bank reconciliations, bank statements and invoices.

The council now uses an external payroll provider which provides for a segregation of duties. The Clerk has currently opted out of pension provision.

Through the information provided to me and information from the Clerk I was able to answer YES to all other assertions of the AIAR.

I would like to wish the Clerk well with the CiLCA course and look forward to being updated from the council later in the year. Please don't hesitate to contact me, if you have any queries relating to this report or other matters.

Yours sincerely,

*K Houlihan*

Kate Houlihan  
Internal Auditor to the Council

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

	<b>Year ending 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Year ending 31 March 2024</b>
1. Balances brought forward	51,820	67,301
2. Annual precept	23,500	25,000
3. Total other receipts	31,277	8,177
4. Staff costs	6,900	11,601
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	32,396	35,294
7. Balances carried forward	67,301	53,583
8. Total cash and investments	67,301	53,583
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	51,503	58,181
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 (2023)*. 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/practitioners-guide-2023>.