HALEBANK PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT 2025-26

YEAR-END REPORT

30th May 2026

Signed: Jo O'Donoghue FSLCC

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THE VOICE FOR LOCAL COUNCIL AUDIT

The internal audit of Halebank Parish Council has been carried out by undertaking the following tests as specified in the SAPPP (Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel) Practitioners' Guide 2025.

Checking that books of account have been properly kept throughout the year

- Checking a sample of payments to ensure that the Council's financial regulations have been met, payments are supported by invoices, expenditure is approved, and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Reviewing the Council's risk assessment and ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to manage all identified risks
- Verifying that the annual precept request is the result of a proper budgetary process; that budget progress has been regularly monitored and that the council's reserves are appropriate
- Checking income records to ensure that the correct price has been charged, income has been received, recorded and promptly banked and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Checking that salaries to employees have been paid in accordance with Council approvals and that PAYE and NI requirements have been properly applied

AGAR certificate reference	Internal Audit checks for expected controls 2025/26	Recommendation	HPC Response/action
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year. AND Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	A1. correct roll forward of the prior year cashbook balances to the new financial year A2. a sample of financial transactions in cashbooks checked to bank statements A3. bank reconciliations are prepared routinely, are subject to independent scrutiny and sign-off by members A4. verified the accuracy of the year-end bank reconciliation detail and ensure accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the AGAR, section 2, line 8.		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	B1. procedures are in place for acquisition of formal tenders and quotes and are in line with the SOs and FRs which are based on the latest version. B2. reviewed the procedures for receipt of invoices B3. VAT reclaims are prepared and submitted in a timely manner in line with the underlying records and in accordance with current HMRC requirements	1. Financial Regulations should be reviewed on an annual basis. The most recent review is November 2024.	
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of	C1. The Council has prepared, and formally adopted, at least once annually, an appropriate and comprehensive register of assessed risks, both regular and ad hoc C2. appropriate levels of insurance cover are in place for land, buildings, public, employers and hirers' (where applicable) liability. C3. the level of fidelity cover is £100,000.	2. Recommended to adopt an internal control policy.	

arrangements to manage these.			
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	D1. The Council has considered, approved and adopted the annual precept for the coming year in accordance with the required parent authority timetable D2. IA informed that budget reports are prepared and submitted to HPC periodically during the year but there is no indication that an appropriate commentary on any significant variances is provided D3. the precept received in the accounts matches the prior year submission form to the relevant authority and the public record of precepted amounts	3. Provide a regular commentary on variances within the budget	
E. Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for.	E1. Income was received and properly recorded. E2. VAT was appropriately accounted for and regular claims for VAT refund claimed.		
F. Petty Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for	F1. No petty cash held		

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	G1. formal employment contracts are in place for all employees G2. appropriate procedures are in place for the payment of PAYE and NI requirements.		
H. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	H1. The Council is maintaining an asset register net of VAT and removing any disposed of / no longer serviceable assets.	4. The council must review the asset register and formally resolve the value of the current assets and carry out a physical check.	
I. Periodic bank reconciliations were carried out throughout the year	I1. The Council has met the requirements.		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cashbook, supported by an	J1. The Council operates on a receipts and payments basis.		

adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.			
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the prior year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.	NA		
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website / web page, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	L1. IA has reviewed the Council's website and established that information needs to be included on the website. L2. The following needs to be added to the website: Asset Register L3. Finance reports are included in the meeting documents however there is no narrative to explain any budget variations.	5. The Council must provide the Publication Scheme on the website together with a separate listing of payments over £100 and a website accessibility statement. This is outstanding from the previous year.	
M. The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public	M1. The Exercise of Public Rights notice was not issued until 25th July 2025 with the period of 28th July to 8th September 2025 which does not include the 1st 10 working days of July. This does not conform with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	6. The Exercise of Public Rights for the audit year 2025-26 must be published one day before commencement and must include the	

rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.		1st 10 working days of July 2026. The latest start date is 1st July 2026 with the notice dated one day before commencement.	
N. The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.	N1. the statutory disclosure / publication requirements in relation to the prior year's AGAR have not been met. N2. there is no evidence that Section 2 was signed and dated by the Clerk prior to the meeting.	7. The IA must sign and date Section 2 prior to the meeting and include this information within the minutes of the meeting where the AGAR is approved.	
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	O1. The authority has not complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance. O2. There is no IT Policy in place. The 2025 Practitioners Guide requires: 'All smaller authorities must have an IT policy. This explains how everyone, clerks, members and other staff, should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment and must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.)d. O3. There is no accessibility statement. O4. halebankparishcouncil.gov.uk does not meet WCAG 2.2 AA. At minimum, it appears non-compliant on the accessibility-statement requirement.	8. The Council must formally approve an IT Policy in line with the 2025 Practitioners' Guide 2025. 9. The Council must formally approve an Accessibility Statement. 10. The Council should undertake a review of the website to ensure it meets with WCAG 2.2 AA where possible.	

P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee	NA The Council does not hold trust funds.		