



INTERNAL AUDIT CHECKLIST ‘YEAR END 2024/25’

Name of Authority: Sawston Parish Council**Date(s) of Audit:** 28th May & 4th June 2025

Audit Completed By: Penny Bryant

AGAR Certificate Reference	Work Completed by CAPALC	Comments	Recommendations
<p>A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year.</p>	<p>During our visit(s) we have reviewed the accounting system and checked that the information is recorded accurately and promptly. This means we have reviewed the cashbook, examined a sample of financial transactions, ensured bank reconciliations are carried out, etc.</p>	<p>The Council have QuickBooks software and use an accountancy firm Lanham’s to carry out the main day-to-day accounting as well as the year-end.</p> <p>The RFO meets quarterly with the accountant to discuss the accounts.</p> <p>Monthly bank reconciliations are produced with accompanying paperwork and invoices.</p> <p>A sample check of payments made and money received was undertaken for June and July 2024.</p>	<p>None</p> <hr/> <p>Council response:</p>
<p>B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments</p>	<p>We have reviewed Financial Regulations and Standing Orders ensuring they are adequate and if</p>	<p>The Council has recently resolved to re-adopt the prior year Financial Regulations and</p>	<p>Whilst outside the internal audit for 2024-25, it is recommended the Council adopt the NALC</p>

<p>were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</p>	<p>model documents are used, they are up to date.</p> <p>We have also reviewed procedures for approval of invoices and payments, checked recording of VAT and that VAT is claimed where appropriate. If debit/credit cards are held, we have established the limits and ensured there are controls in place for usage.</p>	<p>Standing Orders without the most recent updates.</p> <p>NALC published updated Financial Regulations in March 2024 with a further update in May 2025. Standing Orders were updated by NALC in May 2025.</p> <p>VAT records were available and they are being claimed where appropriate.</p> <p>Payments are being authorised at council/committee meetings. A full list of payments authorised should be published rather than a reduced version. This allows for a transparent audit trail and clarity across the board when spending public money. A complete list allows easy cross referencing for approval in the Minutes and against the bank statements and cashbook. The exception to this (due to the sensitive nature of the payments) is the payroll. A total figure which includes net pay,</p>	<p>updated Financial Regulations May 2025 and Standing Orders May 2025 to the latest model versions.</p> <p>A complete list of payments should be published in the Minutes with a summary of the payroll figure including tax & NI.</p> <p>Council response:</p>
--	--	--	---

		HMRC payments and pensions should be published.	
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	We have checked to see that the Council has a Risk Register in place. If in place, we have checked to see if the Council has considered all significant risks, appropriate levels of insurance is in place, arrangements are in place for monitoring public open spaces, etc. and that a process of internal control is in place.	<p>The council has a comprehensive Risk Management policy and detailed processes in place.</p> <p>Hard copy documents are retained either at the parish office or with the grounds staff.</p> <p>This in itself carries a risk such as missing papers/photographs and delayed access if required urgently. E.g. the clerk needing paperwork from grounds staff.</p> <p>There is risk management software available which allows records to be kept remotely.</p> <p>Public Liability insurance cover is set at £10 million.</p>	<p>Improvements should be made to the risk assessment monitoring forms to show not just the date the risk was identified and the urgent nature of that but, the date it was repaired/removed/replaced.</p> <p>To review the current practices and perhaps consider using software to centralise all the risk assessments, photographs and completed work. This should be accessible by all key/relevant staff and will assist the clerk and/or councillors to monitor the checks and ensure remedial action is taking place within the critical timelines.</p>

Council response:

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

We have checked that the Council has considered its income and expenditure requirements to formally adopt an appropriate budget. That the Council has reviewed performance against the budget throughout the year, has established Earmarked Reserves which are reviewed annually during the budgetary process. That the precept request is submitted to the relevant authority on time and matches the receipt in the accounts.

The budget and precept process was discussed with the clerk and there is evidence in the Finance Committee Minutes and full Council Minutes (28th Nov 23) the 2024-25 budget was approved and the precept set for 2024-25 @ £402,491.63

During 2024-25 the council held £109k in unallocated reserves and £490k in earmarked reserves.

Whilst the council monitor the budget, it is not published on the website.

When the Council's new website is in place it would be helpful to have a 'Finance' page. This would allow all financial matters to be found in one location easily. It would also be of benefit to publish the agreed budget and the quarterly updates throughout the financial year to aid transparency.

The Publication Scheme states budgets can be downloaded from the website, therefore they should be available.

The Fidelity Guarantee (insurance cover) is currently set at £300,000. The council should review this amount and consider whether this is appropriate bearing in mind the amount of funds in their accounts.

			Council response:
E. Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly blanked; and VAT appropriately accounted for.	We have checked that expected income has been received and checked that there are no obvious omissions. Income may include allotments, cemeteries, hall hire, leases, or other revenue streams depending on the council. We have checked that there are appropriate follow ups made for 'aged debtors'.	From the checks made the income is collected as expected and VAT accounted for where required.	None
			Council response:
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	If held, we have considered the amount of petty cash held in line with the number of transactions made during the year.	No petty cash is held.	None
			Council response:
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in	We picked one month and tested the payroll to ensure the correct deductions have been made,	The Council use Lanham's Accountants for the payroll.	None

<p>accordance with the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</p>	<p>payments made on time and correct amounts.</p>	<p>The draft payments are provided to the clerk who confirms they are due.</p> <p>Payments are made in accordance with the above.</p>	<p>Council response:</p>
<p>H. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</p> <p><i>This section/assurance should be extended to include loans to or by the authority.</i></p>	<p>We have checked to see that the Council has a formal asset register in place and that it is up to date with any acquisitions and disposals. If there are long-term investments, we have checked to see that an Investment Strategy is in place.</p>	<p>The asset register is up-to-date and building valuations were carried out in June 2024.</p> <p>The insurers were advised of the updated valuations.</p> <p>There is an Investment Strategy in place.</p>	<p>The Council may wish to consider their long-term investments in line with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).</p> <p>The clerk has been provided with the advice sheet. An extract from the advice sheet states.</p> <p>“FSCS does not protect deposits made by a public authority (including a parish council), unless it is a small local authority with an annual budget of up to EUR500,000” (about £430,950 using the required 3 July 2023 exchange rate).</p> <p>Council response:</p>
<p>I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</p>	<p>We reviewed a selection of bank reconciliations throughout the year including year-end.</p>	<p>Bank reconciliations are completed and a quarterly check is undertaken by Lanham's Accountants with the clerk/RFO.</p>	<p>At present the bank reconciliations are not checked by council against the invoices and payments received for that period nor are they subsequently signed off as correct. It is</p>

			recommended either the Finance Committee Chair or Chair of the Council completes this task with the RFO and signs off the monthly bank statements to verify they are correct.
			Council response:
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 adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	We have reviewed the accounting statements of the year ended 31 st March 2025 to ensure that they have been prepared correctly on an [income and expenditure] or [receipts and payments] basis and are adequately supported.	The accounts look to be completed on an I & E basis and prepared correctly.	None
			Council response:
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.	We have confirmed that the Council was subject to limited assurance review OR We have confirmed that the Council was exempt, met the criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.		None
			Council response:

<p>L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the Council’s website (or webpage) to confirm it is meeting the requirements of the relevant regulations.</p>	<p>The current website is soon to be replaced with a new one which I understand is expected by June 2025.</p> <p>The current website is org.uk but the new one will be a gov.uk.</p> <p>Councillors already have bespoke gov.uk email addresses.</p>	<p>Greater clarity is needed for the new website. It is difficult as a member of the public to find some information on the current site. Ideally, there should be a separate page for finance so all key financial records are in one area.</p> <p>Council response:</p>
<p>M. The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the notice announced during the summer of 2024 along with Sections 1 and 2 of the 2023/24 AGAR. We have obtained evidence that the required documentation has been published on the Council’s website (webpage).</p>	<p>This appears to be in order.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Council response:</p>
<p>N. The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the documentation the Council published for the 2023/24 AGAR was compliant with regulations.</p>	<p>This appears to be in order.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Council response:</p>
<p>O. Trust funds (including charitable) – the council met its responsibilities as a trustee.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the Council’s responsibilities with respect to [enter charities here] OR</p> <p>We have checked that they are not responsible for any charities.</p>		<p>None</p> <p>Council response:</p>

Notes

In our column entitled 'Recommendations' we have highlighted areas where we believe improvements could be considered or attention is required if necessary. If we feel you should be considering a response to your Assertions under Section 1, we have commented under our column 'Comments'.