

Cheselbourne Parish Council Audit – 2021/22

Summary of Audit Checklist Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

That an amendment is made to the minutes of the May 2021 meeting to show what the amount of £166.99 relates to.

As this relates to just to payments the addition could be made to the signed copy of the minutes as long as it were initialled by the Chairman and the amended minutes added to the website.

Recommendation 2:

That the 4 payments relating to Mustoe Shorter / ICO / John Lilley and C Haskett are added to the minutes of the meeting immediately after they were paid and the minute amendments re-approved. The amended minutes should be added to the website.

The following payments are missing from the minutes:

Direct Debit - ICO £35.00 (paid 9/9/21)
BACS 024 – Mustoe Shorter - £649.00 (paid 1/11/21)
BACS 038 - John Lilley £1280 (paid 17/1/22)
BACS 039 - C Haskett £50 (paid 18/3/22)

Where the Clerk has delegated authority or a pre-approved spend for a supplier/contractor they should still state at the next available Parish Council meeting that the payment has been made. The minutes are the corporate 'permanent' record of the council whereas the financial statements and bank records only need to be kept for 7 years. This is why it is important that all financial transactions should be noted in the minutes even if authorised between meetings.

Recommendation 3:

That any income other than the Precept, VAT return and Interest is noted in the minutes.

There is supporting paperwork for the amount of £82.90 relating to funds raised at the Tree event and ringfenced for the Jubilee, however whilst there is mention in the minutes (21.58 – Nov) that there would be an event, the amount raised was never reported.

There is supporting paperwork for the amount of £200 from the Heart of Dorset group which has folded and funds redistributed and ringfenced for the climate group. The minutes from the meeting after this paperwork is dated do not mention the income.

Whilst in this case it is clear that the funds are from legitimate sources and to be used for the benefit of the Parish it is important for transparency that all income is minuted with a clear indication of its source and purpose.

Recommendation 4:

That the payment to D Hampton for the domain name is re-adjusted for VAT.

The receipt for this payment clearly shows that it is for the Cheselbourne Parish Council domain name and therefore a valid vatable expense, similar to other reimbursements which are clearly invoiced to a councillor c/o CPC.

The cashbook needs to be amended to include the VAT of £2.40

Recommendation 5:

That any VAT reclaim due for 2020-21 is undertaken as soon as possible to avoid being out of time.

I have checked on the website but been unable to ascertain the amount that should have been claimed back as only the accounts are available and not the cash book.

Recommendation 6:

That a copy of the Clerks contract is included in the audit file for the following year.

The Clerks hours and PayScale can then be cross- checked, along with responsibilities and any delegated duties.

Recommendation 7:

That the Clerk pay be brought in line with the NJC Local Government Salary (SCP) Scales

It is important that Clerks are paid in accordance with the Salary Scales listed in the NJC Salary scales. This ensures that there is a clear structure with which to pay the clerk and if required award increments depending on their addition responsibilities or learning, more importantly though it gives a clear pay award each year to ensure that Clerks are paid commensurate with their peers.

At present the Clerks pay sits between SCP 9 @ £11.05 and SCP 10 @ £11.28.

If the Clerks contract states an hourly rate figure it is recommended that this be changed to a specific SCP grade so that the actual hourly rate can move with the pay awards each year.

Recommendation 8:

That the asset register is updated and placed into the audit folder with the updated asset figure of £8184.00

The new assets purchased this year should be added to the register in the audit file.

Recommendation 9:

That the asset register is expanded to include the insured cost and replacement value.

This is so that it is clear that the insurance values are sufficient and that the replacement values are known so that contingency /ear marked funds can be prepared.

Recommendation 10:

That the insurance schedule is included in future audit files and that the new purchases have been added.

The insurance is currently renewed as part of a 3-year deal, therefore would have been checked as part of last years audit. It is important to check that the new assets have been included on the insurance.

Recommendation 11:

That the Internal audit report and a complete list of expenditure should be added to the website for 2020-21

It is a requirement of the transparency code and noted on the front sheet of the AGAR that the internal audit report should be published on the Parish Council website if a limited assurance review is not going to be carried out by an External audit team.

It is also a requirement in the transparency code that all expenditure over £100 is listed. This can be overcome by publishing the cashbook in full which also helps to support the requirement to publish detailed accounts.

Whilst the Parish Council has produced summary accounts with the totals for each type of expenditure it has not broken this down into items which cost over £100.

Recommendation 12:

That the public inspection dates are agreed and minuted at the point at which the AGAR is agreed and signed.

This is to ensure that the dates are recorded on the Councils website to reach a wider public than just the local notice boards. It also allows those with limited mobility to know that the inspection period has been set.

Paula Harding
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