

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils

For the attention of Weston Colville Parish Council

20th June 2023

Dear Clerk and Chairman

Re: Internal Audit – Weston Colville Parish Council

I undertook the Internal Audit for Weston Colville Parish Council on 15th June 2023 and by reviewing the council's website together with papers supplied by the Clerk. I enclose the Internal Audit Report to be shared with all Weston Colville Parish Councillors together with this covering letter. There are additional comments and recommendations within the report itself for council to review in the 'Expected Control' and 'Notes' columns.

I was pleased to see the council records are kept in an orderly fashion and Jess was extremely helpful.

The following recommendations are made,

1. Add a link from Weston Colville Parish Council website to South Cambridgeshire DC website for the Councillors Register of Interests. Good practice would be to remind councillors at the Annual Meeting to update their Register of Interests as personal matters sometimes change during the year.
2. There is a slight mix up over the terms 'Annual Parish Meeting' and 'Annual Meeting' and the calling notices.
At the Annual Meeting of the council (which is not an AGM) is the election of the Chairman as the first item of business, this is correct.
Annual Parish Meeting (meeting of the electorate) – This is a separate meeting, the agenda should be signed by the Chairman, published separately to the Annual Meeting and with 7 clear days.

Both the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Annual Parish Meeting can be held on the same evening, but one must be properly closed before the second meeting starts.
3. Information Commissioners Office (ICO) Registration – An application to register was made in January 2023 but it does not seem to have been completed by the ICO. I recommend the Clerk follows this up (Ref C1289314)
4. Minutes – Loose leaf Minute books are lawful provided that the pages are consecutively numbered, and each page is initialled by the person signing the Minutes at the time of approval in addition to signing the last page. This helps the council prevent fraud and the insertion of replacement pages to change resolutions as part of their risk management procedures. It is good practice to retain a copy of the agenda with the matching signed Minutes. The hard copy Minutes are the only lawful and authentic record and must be retained.

The Minute Books can be archived at the Records Office, the Records Office can advise if the Minutes need to be bound. Electronic versions can be kept for convenience, but it is the hard copy which is the only lawful record.

5. Risk Management – This area could do with a detailed review. Councils should keep separate written records of their formal risk checks and subsequent maintenance/repairs. In the unfortunate event of an accident or injury these reports will be required by the insurance company as evidence to support the council against any claim. Without the written reports it will be difficult for the insurance company to refute a claim. The JPAG Guide 2023 has a good section on risk management.

6. VAT – The VAT Form 126 still needs to be submitted for 2022 - 2023

7. The following policies ought to be adopted by the council.

Disciplinary & Grievance procedures

Data Protection Policy & accompanying data protection documents

Archiving & Retention Policy including how the destruction of old documents will be conducted.

If you have any questions relating to my covering letter or the accompanying IA report, please do get in touch.

Kind regards

Penny Bryant

Penny Bryant BA(Hons) FSLCC
County Executive Officer