

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aim to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit.

Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control: -

'The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control.... care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.'

As part of its internal control, the Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on an annual basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE Yes or No	DOCUMENT/COMMENTS	CHECKED ✓
Adoption/Review of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders	Yes	New Model Standing Orders adopted at the September 2025 meeting. See minutes Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Procedure for Online Banking.	
Maintaining an up-to-date Asset Register	Yes	See Asset Register. Asset Register reviewed and updated annually at the March meeting.	
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets (street furniture, bus shelters etc)	Yes	See Inspection of Council Property checklist. Council's assets inspected annually after the March meeting and any repairs or maintenance arranged.	
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of insurance cover	Yes	See insurance information and minutes of March meeting. Insurance cover is reviewed annually in March.	
Annual review of all risk assessments including financial risks	Yes	See Risk Assessment and Minutes of the March meeting.	
Review of contracts/contractors and their performance	Yes	At the December meeting. See contract information.	
Regular bank reconciliation, inde-	Yes	Monthly by the clerk and checked by a councillor at every meeting.	

pendently reviewed.		See minutes and accounts folder .	
Regular review of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes	Yes - see Internal Control Statement .	
Recording in the minutes or appendices of the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved	Yes	In the minutes and in the Council's accounts. See minutes and accounts folder .	
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted	Yes	Payments are authorised at meetings and approved payments minuted, invoices are checked at every meeting and signed by two councillors. See minutes and accounts folder .	
Regular inspection of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked	Yes	The clerk presents a record of receipts at every meeting. See minutes .	
Check to ensure that the precept is recorded in the cashbook matches the District Council's notification	Yes	This is checked at the March meeting. See minutes .	
Regular financial reporting to the Parish Council, including Receipts and Payments and updates on reserves	Yes	The clerk presents a record of receipts and payments at every meeting. An update on reserves is given at the September, December and March meetings when the budget is set or reviewed. See minutes .	
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council	Yes	At the September and March meetings. See budget info and minutes .	
VAT correctly accounted for, VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook and minuted.	Yes	VAT is accounted for in the Council's Scribe accounts. The clerk reclaims VAT for the previous financial year in April each year. See minutes and VAT info .	
Council has reviewed the internal audit report and, where applicable, the external audit report, and has addressed any recommendations, comments, or required actions	Yes	See minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May.	
Staffing and Employment compliance: Review of the following:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts of employment for 	Yes	At the December meeting.	

<p>staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual performance appraisal • Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation • PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer • Pension Regulator re-declaration to be completed every three years 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>At the December meeting. As and when legislation changes.</p> <p>Ousden Parish Council uses HMRC's basic PAYE tool to ensure that PAYE/NIC is properly operated. See minutes and Confidential cashbook.</p>	
Compliance with DCLG Guide <i>Open & Accountable Local Government</i> 2014, Part 4:	Yes	Audit documentation prepared in accordance with DCLG guidelines.	
<p>Compliance with Local Transparency Code in line with your council's turnover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 • Annual Turnover between £25,000 and £200,000 	Yes	<p>The clerk prepares a Financial Report which meets the requirements of the Transparency Code and which is published on the Council's website at https://ousdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/parish-council/finance/</p>	
<p>Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and the following are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy Notices • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention and Disposal Policies 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Approved at the meeting on See minutes.</p> <p>See GDPR documents.</p> <p>Combined into one Data Protection Policy using SALC template.</p>	
Minutes properly numbered with a master copy kept securely for safekeeping	Yes	See minutes .	

Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality where applicable.	Yes	Register of Interest forms are reviewed annually in May. See minutes .	
Adoption of new Code of Conduct for Members.	Yes	See Code of Conduct and minutes .	
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Yes	After the 2023 elections, annually by the Chair and when a new councillor is co-opted.	
Annual review of council policies.	Yes	At the September meeting.	
The Council's website complies with WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards	Yes	A website compliance check was carried out by Suffolk Cloud in 2020 and the recommendations actioned.	
Email management: The council has a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain	Yes		
IT policy adopted	Yes	At the December 2025 meeting.	

Signed:

(Councillor). Date: