Sarah Kearney
Clerk to Chesterton Parish Council
22 Exeter Road
Kidlington
OX5 2DY

12th June 2023

Elaine Anstee
16 Foxwood
Aston
Oxfordshire
OX18 2DZ

Dear Sarah,

Internal Audit – 2022/2023 For the Attention of the Parish Council

I have carried out an internal audit review, acting independently, proportionally and basing this review on the requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022-23 and JPAG Governance, Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England 2022 and Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015. I have looked at the assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls that should have been in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

I use the guidance noted above to ensure that all internal audits are conducted with due professional care, integrity, and independence. Conclusions arrived at as part of the audit are based upon objectivity and evidence. The internal audit is not a detailed inspection of all records and transactions of the Council to detect error or fraud. It is the periodic independent review of a Council's internal controls designed to support the development of effective and efficient procedures under the Council's control. The management of the Council's internal controls is the responsibility of the staff and Councillors and internal audit. (Reference: Governance and Accountability for Smaller Councils - A Practitioners' Guide 2021 – Section 4).

This audit has been carried out using the council's website and the summary document attached which was completed by the Clerk prior to the audit. The use of the website for the internal audit is to enable the internal auditor to have the Transparency Guidance integral to the process. The form and 3 months of financial transactions were checked. The Clerk and I met via Zoom on 17th April 2023, discussed the checklist that had been completed and the physically signed minutes that I needed to see.

Internal Control Objectives 22-23

I have had to mark the internal control objective (ICO) M and (ICO) N as 'No' for the following reasons:

ICO M – Published on the website but states 'electors rights' as, Thursday 17th June 2022 to Wednesday 26th July 2022. The period is incorrect as the days are incorrect, should have been Friday and Tuesday, also it is 28 working days not the statutory requirement of 30 working days. This was picked up by the external auditor for the 21-22 publication of elector's rights.
ICO N – External auditor report discussed and minuted, but I could not find it published on the website. It is not located with the rest of the AGAR under the finance pages.

Other Comment and Notes

1. For Standing Orders the areas in bold on the NALC Model ones should be kept in bold. These are the statutory requirements and cannot be changed.
2. For any changes to policies, if the detail is not published online, it would be transparent to include the changes in the minutes.
3. The budget and Precept ideally would be resolved upon separately and the amount of the precept recorded in the minutes with the band D equivalent.
4. Public Liability and Employer's Liability stated as £10,000 which I presume was a typing error. If not, I would recommend this is reviewed as £10 million would be the standard amount inline with the Principal Authority.
5. Land and building assets (including any Land Registry numbers) should be published under the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015.
6. It would be good practice under the Practitioners Guide 2022 for physical assets to be check and this recorded in the minutes at least twice a year.
7. From a risk perspective it would be recommended that there are 3 councillors who can sign cheques or authorise electronic payments in case of absence for any reason.
8. It would be good practice for older minutes to be sent to the Oxford History Centre for permanent retention on behalf of the Parish Council. This then manages the risk of destruction or loss in error. The minutes are legal documents that have to be kept in physical form in perpetuity.

In summary

The Council has competent arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its systems of internal financial control are transparent and effective. There are approval and authorisation controls to minimise risk. The audit and management trail for financial transactions is effective.

Yours sincerely

By email Elaine

Anstee BA Hons: Community Governance Attachments:
Page 3 of the AGAR for 2022-23 - signed.
Summary for 2022-23
Invoice Number EAA/2023/015