



Tekla Hicks (PSLCC)  
Parish Clerk  
Great Hinton Parish Council

5<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Dear Tekla,

### **INTERNAL AUDIT 2026**

Parish & Town Auditing Services have been appointed to undertake the internal audits at Great Hinton Parish Council. The annual internal audit for 2025/26 financial year was completed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

I can confirm that I am independent of the Parish Council.

As stated in the Letter of Engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete the internal audit section of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year. In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements. This will be undertaken by the Council's appointed External Auditor.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These controls are included in the following report.

The Audit has identified a number of recommendations to help update and improve the Council's current procedures. The audit has found no areas of concern and the Council's procedures and controls are generally working well.

Thank you for all the information you have provided to enable the audit to be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Russell, Internal Auditor

## **INTERNAL AUDIT**

Outlined below is an overview of the 10 Assertions within the Practitioners Guide 2025. Each of these are dealt with under the relevant Governance sections contained in Section 1 of the AGAR:

### AGS Assertion 1 — Financial management and preparation of accounts

- Accounting Records and supporting documents:
- Bank reconciliation:
- Budget setting:
- Investments:
- Reserves:
- General Reserves:
- Earmarked and other reserves:

### AGS Assertion 2 — Internal control

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:
- Safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money:
- Employment:
- VAT
- Fixed assets and equipment:
- Loans and long-term liabilities:

### AGS Assertion 3 — Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

- Acting with its powers:

### AGS Assertion 4 — Exercise of public rights

### AGS Assertion 5 — Risk management

### AGS Assertion 6 — Internal audit

### AGS Assertion 7 — Reports from auditors

### AGS Assertion 8 — Significant events

### AGS Assertion 9 — Trust funds (local councils only)

### AGS Assertion 10 — Digital and data compliance

The following headings are based on Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

**A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.**

The Parish Clerk has been appointed as the RFO (LGA1972 s151). **Recommend that this information is included on the website**

The roll over figure is £6,085 (Box 7).

The Council maintains its accounts on a spreadsheet. A sample of the financial transactions between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 has been undertaken. The following checks were carried out:

- A review of the cashbook against the bank statements and invoices paid;
- A sample of Payments have been checked against the bank statements to verify accuracy;
- Expenditure incurred is appropriate.

There is a proper process in place to ensure that financial information is correctly recorded and reported to Council as part of its governance procedures.

All invoices are reviewed by the Parish Clerk for accuracy and authenticity. A list of invoices is presented to Full Council for payment as part of the agenda. Approvals are minuted in the Council minutes. Payment is via online banking.

The Council has a relevant policy in place for making online payments: [Great Hinton Parish Council](#)

The Council has a Risk Assessment in place which was reviewed in May 2025 (minute 25-26/18.1t). ([Great Hinton PARISH COUNCIL](#))

The Clerk/RFO is responsible for all financial transactions which are authorised by Full Council for payment.

Bank reconciliations are prepared bi-monthly and the copies signed off by a Councillor.

The year end bank reconciliation has been completed. This was referenced back to the bank statements. The final balance held by the Council amounts to £7,851.33 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.**

Tenders and Contracts are governed by Financial Regulations. All contracts being tendered should be published on the Parish Council's website as well as the Find a Tender portal where required. Due to the size of the Council using the Find a Tender portal is unlikely to occur.

Please note that Contracts Finder has now been replaced by Find a Tender so all contract information should be publicised on this portal where required. ([Find a Tender](#))

Standing Orders were updated in May 2025. There is not a copy of Standing Orders under policies but a copy was considered on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 ([11\(ii\) GHPC draft standing orders Dec 2024.docx](#))

**Recommend that Standing Order be reviewed and updated as the limits in the documentation is incorrect. Upload a copy onto the website.**

Financial Regulations are based on an older version of the NALC template and are out of date as they do not reflect the revised limits enacted as part of the Procurement Act 2023. **It is recommended that Financial Regulations are completely revised and based on the latest NALC template.**

Currently the limits in the Financial Regulations do not match with current regulations.

Financial recording and reporting procedure:

- The Council uses a spreadsheet to manage its accounts;
- Invoices are received and reviewed for accuracy and authenticity by the Clerk/RFO. They are inputted onto the spreadsheet and reports are generated to create an audit and approval trail;
- The RFO sets up the payment of invoices and they are authorised for payment via online banking.

There is appropriate segregation in place.

VAT is normally claimed annually. The claim for 2024/25 of £148.56 was received on 05/06/2025. The 2025/26 VAT claim has been submitted and a copy of the submission has been provided. Amount being claimed is £189.68.

The Council does not have a credit card in place.

The Council has the General Power of Competence in place. It was adopted on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Minute 25-26/95i & ii.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.**

An Asset Register is in place. The value of assets is consistent with Box 9 of the AGAR which currently states a value of £10,404. There have been no movements during the year.

The Council is insured with Zurich through Community First Insurance. Policy Number YLL2720278713. It runs from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

The Council is not responsible for any play areas.

The Council has adequate internal controls in place to ensure that it carries out its day-to-day business effectively and efficiently.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

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

At its meeting held on January 2025 Full Council formally approved the budget and the setting of a precept. (Minute 24-25/69.2). **Recommend that the amount of precept requested is included in the minutes.**

It has been confirmed that a precept of £6,144 was requested. (MHCLG Parish Code E3902P108)

Budget monitoring is undertaken and each meeting and a full report is presented to Council.

The Council has Earmarked Reserves in place.

The Council has an adequate General Reserve to meet the requirements in place including specific allocated EMRs.

The Council had the following Bank Statement Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026:

| <b>ACCOUNT</b> | <b>AMOUNT</b>    |
|----------------|------------------|
| Lloyds Current | £7,851.33        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>£7,851.33</b> |

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.**

The Council has no aged debtors.

Great Hinton Parish Council does not manage an allotment site.

The Council is not a burial authority.

The Council does not hire out any venues.

The Council does not have any leases in place.

Council had no other income apart from the precept and a VAT return.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.**

The Council does not operate a petty cash system and did not receive any cash payments during the financial year.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.**

The Clerk has a contract in place.

Members do not receive a members' allowance.

A sample of staff salaries has been checked and confirmed that gross pay is calculated based on the appropriate spinal point. A sample of salaries paid during the year have been reviewed.

Tax codes are applied and included on the payslips and deductions properly calculated.

Payroll is undertaken inhouse using the HMRC software.

The Clerk is not a member of a pension fund.

A test sample was undertaken and it was confirmed that the correct net pay was paid to the employee with tax and NI contributions correctly deducted and paid to the respective agencies.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.**

The asset value reported in the AGAR at section 2, line 9 is £10,404. No movements have been recorded. Council has adequate insurance cover in place.

Council has no long-term investments in place.

Council has no loans in place.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.**

Bank reconciliations are prepared monthly and are signed off at Full Council. Signed copies of the bank reconciliations are uploaded onto the Council's website.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.**

Accounts are maintained on a receipts and payments basis. Appropriate accounting arrangements are in place.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick “not covered”).**

Council met the exemption criteria as required and reported year end at the May Council meeting. (minute 25-26/17.3)

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.**

The following information should be published on the Parish Council’s website under the Smaller Authorities Transparency Code ([SI/SR Template](#))

#### **Expenditure exceeding £100**

Local authorities must publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £100. [Published as part of the agenda papers and minutes.](#)

#### **End of year accounts**

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

#### **Annual governance statement**

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

#### **Internal audit report**

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

#### **List of councillor or member responsibilities**

Annual publication of councillor or member responsibilities no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

### **Location of public land and building assets**

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. Parish councils and port health authorities to publish details of all public land and building assets – either in its full asset and liabilities register or as an edited version. [Published](#)

### **Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings**

Publication of draft minutes from all formal meetings not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. Publication of meeting agendas and associated meeting papers not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate is taking place. [Published](#)

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).**

The publication relating to the Public Notice requirements were met. The Notice states 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025. This meets the statutory 30 day requirement.

The Council formally minute the dates of the public notice at the meeting where the AGAR was approved in May 2025. (25-26/17.4)

**The Council has met this control objective.**

### **N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR.**

Publication Requirements Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage: Before 1 July 2025 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited: [Published](#)
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, approved and signed, page 4: [Published](#)
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25, approved and signed, page 5: [Published](#)

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report. [Published](#).

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.**

Council has a .gov.uk email addresses for its Clerk/RFO. Councillors are also provided with a .gov.uk email address which are published on the website. Council meets best practice advice by having a .gov.uk domain for its website and email account.

The Council has adopted an IT policy as required.

The Council has an up to date Accessibility Statement published on its website.

**Note** that since September 2020, all parish and Parish councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). As from October 2024 that rating level changed from WCAG2.1 AA to WCAG2.2AA so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations.

It has been confirmed that Great Hinton Parish Council website complies with WCAG 2.2 AA.

Accessibility has been reviewed and the parish council section of the website scores 9.5 out of 10. [WAVE Report of Home - greathintonparishcouncil.gov.uk](https://www.greathintonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Data Protection requirements:

- Data Protection Officer – Parish Clerk
- Data Audit: In the process of being undertaken
- Training for staff and Councillors: To be undertaken
- Data Protection Policy: In place
- Data Retention Policy: In place
- Secure data to protect it from Data Breaches: To be undertaken

The Council has the following Data Protection Policies in place:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- GDPR Consent Form
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Privacy notice

**Council will need to ensure that the following requirements are met (Noted that this is currently being actioned):**

- Undertake a data audit and present to Council for adoption
- Adopt a Data Breach Procedure
- Adopt a Subject Access Request procedure
- Organise GDPR training for staff and councillors;
- Ensure that both hard copy and electronic data have relevant protections in place. For hard copy records this will be identified by the audit. For electronic data it is recommended that your IT provider outlines what protections are in place, how often data is backed up and how it is stored. Ensure that all computers have some level of virus protection.

A Freedom of Information Policy is in place: [GHPC Freedom of Information Policy.pdf](#)

A Publication scheme is in place: [Great Hinton Parish Council Publication Scheme 2026.pdf](#)

The Council meets the Smaller Councils Transparency Code as required.

**The Council has met this control objective.**

**P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.**

The Council is not a sole trustee.