Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL

https://holmehaleparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
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.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
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.	✓		
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")*	✓		
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.	✓		
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).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
	Yes	**No**	**Not applicable**
P. **(For local councils only)** Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed). Date(s) internal audit undertaken

08/04/2026

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ROBIN GOREHAM

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit R Goreham

Date 8th April 2026

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report **must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL
Annual Internal Audit Report
(as required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972)
Financial Year ended 31st March 2026

I have in the (virtual) presence of Mrs. Sheryl Irving (Parish Clerk) inspected the parish council documents as appropriate, and line with, the scope of the audit requested.
Sheryl also acts as the Responsible Finance Officer for the council.
Cllr. Dr. Andy Scarlett is presently Chairman of the Council.
I would like to thank the Parish Clerk for providing me with all the information required to carry out the audit.

PREVIOUS AUDIT REPORT
Internal Auditor: No formal recommendations made (April 2025).

ANNUAL PRECEPT REQUEST & BUDGETARY PROCESS
Holme Hale Parish Council approved its Annual Budget and Precept of £9,000 at its meeting of 6th January 2025.
There were no significant unexplained variances in the budget.
Explanations have been provided for all minor variances.
Budgetary process is outlined in the Financial Regulations, Item 3.

BOOK KEEPING (To include End of Year procedures)
The bank is reconciled on a monthly basis.
The cashbook is balanced monthly and is well maintained.
Regular financial reports are provided to each meeting by the Clerk.
End of Year Bank Reconciliation and Financial Report have been correctly prepared.
Banking is with Unity Trust.
No petty cash is held.

ACCOUNTING & INTERNAL CONTROLS
(To include regular review of key policies)
Receipts & Payments is used for the basis of accounting.
The Council has certified itself exempt from a limited assurance review, met the exemption criteria and made the correct declaration.

Risk Assessment & Management policy – January 2026 and annually.
Financial Regulations – reviewed January 2026
Standing Orders – reviewed January 2026 and reviewed every three years.

Risk Management and Financial Regulations are reviewed annually.
The Reserves policy is contained within the Risk Management policy, as discussed last year.
As noted previously, the council has adopted an exclusively online banking system.
The position of Internal Controls officer is presently vacant. However, it is hoped that another councillor will fill role the soon.

PAYROLL / PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF PAYE / NIC / VAT
PAYE and NIC have been properly operated in house (with the use of HMRC Basic Tools).
VAT has been correctly implemented.
The latest Return covers the period 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026.

GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES
(To include Salaries & Terms of Employment)
The clerk's salary is paid in accordance with members approval and statutory guidance, and documented in the relevant minutes.
P60 was submitted for my inspection.

Council policies include:
Code of Conduct, Data Protection, Equality, Media, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Complaints and Biodiversity.

The Council holds NALC membership;
Both NALC and NPTS provide training for staff & councillors.

COMPLIANCE WITH ASSERTION 10: laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance

1. An IT Policy was drawn up and adopted in January 2026.
2. A Norfolk Parishes gov.uk domain website is in use.
3. The Council's website provides accessible information which is regularly updated.
4. The Council has adopted a Retention & Disposal policy.
5. The council has formulated a Website Acessibility statement.

A councillor training log is kept providing details of all training activity.

Members should be encouraged to attend training on data protection and digital governance, if this is not already the case.

INSPECTION OF ASSETS REGISTER & INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The council holds assets which include:

three bus shelters;
three noticeboards;
a SAM2 speed sign;
a wooden foot bridge;
Village gates (station Road);
four village signs;
four planters;
misc. benches and a number of electric pole lamps.

I have inspected the Assets Register (updated January 2026) which is well presented.
I would suggest that values are reviewed periodically to ensure insurance requirements continue to be met.
Insurance provider is Clear Councils (renewed May 2025).

CONCLUSIONS & ANY RECOMMENDATIONS

I would make no formal recommendations at this time and I would thank the Clerk for the efficient manner in which she has presented the accounts and other supporting documentation.
I remain satisfied that this parish council is functioning to a good standard and is fully discharging its legal and statutory responsibilities.

Accordingly, I have duly signed and completed the relevant section (Form 2) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26.

ROBIN GOREHAM

(Internal Auditor) April 2026