Black Rose Solutions Limited

17th May 2018

Dear Ellen,

Outwoods Parish Council - Internal Audit 2017/18

I confirm that I have carried out an examination of your accounts and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

I can state that I have no concerns and nothing significant to report (minor observations listed over).

I would also confirm that I am totally independent of your Council and have no conflicts of interest arising, at any level, from association with any Member, employee or supplier.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sandra Morris ACMA

Black Rose Solutions Limited

Internal Audit Summary

Budgetary controls – an annual budget is prepared to support the precept, there are no significant unexplained variances. However, this is not formally reported to the council other than at year end and while setting the precept.

It is good practice to report actual versus budget to the council regularly, I would recommend that this is done at least quarterly.

Income Controls – Income is properly recorded and promptly banked. The precept recorded agrees to LDCs notification.

Petty Cash Procedures – not applicable. Petty cash items are spent by the clerk using a prepaid card..

Payroll Controls – all employees have contracts, PAYE/NIC is properly operated, payments appear reasonable and approved by the council.

Asset Controls – the Asset Register is up to date and where possible matches to insurance valuations.

Bank Reconciliation – the bank reconciliation is prepared regularly and there are no unexplained balancing entries.

The bank reconciliation should be reviewed by someone independent of creation and regularly minuted as having been made available to councillors for review.

Year End Procedures – Year end accounts are prepared on the Income and expenditure basis, accounts agree with the cashbook, there is an audit trail to all underlying financial records, debtors and creditors have been properly recorded.

Proper Bookkeeping – the cashbook is up to date, correct, regularly balanced and presented to council.

Payment Controls – an RFO has been appointed, payments are supported by invoices, authorised by 2 councillors and minuted. VAT is identified, recorded and reclaimed.

On occasion, items for payment which are received soon before the meeting have been written onto the payments list by hand – these should be initially to confirm that they have been added prior to approval. Sometimes these have not been transcribed onto the approved minutes.
It is accepted that late payments can be considered and approved, but care needs to be taken that they are approved and recorded properly.

Claims for expenses, or reimbursement to councillors are often not clearly documented. Without adequate documentation there are numerous issues - payments could be deemed to be taxable benefits, VAT cannot be reclaimed, insurance and warranty cover cannot be guaranteed without proof of purchase.
I recommend consistent use of a standard expense form giving detail of the expense, and signed by the claimee as being incurred wholly on council business.

Review and Approval of Policies – standing orders, financial regulations, governance statement, risk register and asset register are reviewed and approved on an annual basis.

Certificate of Exemption

To be completed only by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2018, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2018 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted notifying the external auditor.

OUTWOODS PARISH COUNCIL

certifies that during the financial year 2017/18, the higher of the authority's gross income for the year **or** gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Annual gross income for the authority 2017/18:	11,170.19
Annual gross expenditure for the authority 2017/18:	13,678.91

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt,** so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority **is unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Part 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of £200 +VAT will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority has been in existence since before 1st April 2014
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2016/17), the external auditor **has not:**
  - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
  - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
  - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
  - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
  - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If you are able to confirm that the above statements apply and that the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and submitted to the external auditor.

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Annual Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on a public website* before 2 July 2018. **By signing this certificate you are also confirming that this will be done.**

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer — Date: 11/06/2018

Signed by Chairman — Date: 11/06/18

Email: opclerk@outwoodsparishcouncil.org.uk

Telephone number: 01283 410171

*Published web address *(not applicable to Parish Meetings)*

outwoodsparishcouncil.org.uk

This Certificate of Exemption should be returned as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2017/18

OUTWOODS PARISH COUNCIL

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2018.

The internal audit for 2017/18 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	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	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. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty 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 and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
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. **(For local councils only)**	Yes	No	Not applicable
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: 22/3/18 + 17/5/18

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: SANDRA MORRIS ACMA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: [signature]

Date: 17/05/18

*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).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

We acknowledge as the members of:

OUTWOODS PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2018, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A — *has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
			✓

This Annual Governance Statement is approved by this authority and recorded as minute reference:

15 – 11.06.18

dated 11/06/2018

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval is given:

Chairman

Clerk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18 for

OUTWOODS PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2017 £	31 March 2018 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	10,722	11,719	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	8,793	8,987	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,420	2,183	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	2,921	4,805	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	/	/	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	7,296	8,874	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	11,719	9,211	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	11,719	9,211	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	33,566	34,573	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	/	/	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	*The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2018 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return present fairly the financial position of this authority and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer

[redacted]

Date 11/06/2018

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

11/06/2018

and recorded as minute reference:

16 - 11.06.18

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where approval of the Accounting Statements is given

[redacted]

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18 for

OUTWOODS PARISH COUNCIL

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Signed by Responsible Financial Officer

[redacted]

Date 11/06/2018

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11/06/2018

and recorded as minute reference:

16 - 11.06.18

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where approval of the Accounting Statements is given

[redacted]

PART 5

Inspection and notice procedure

Period for the exercise of public rights

14.—(1) Any rights of objection, inspection and questioning of the local auditor conferred by sections 26 and 27 of the Act may only be exercised within a single period of 30 working days.

(2) The period referred to in paragraph (1) starts with the day on which the period for the exercise of public rights is treated as having been commenced in accordance with regulation 15(3).

(3) During the period for the exercise of public rights a relevant authority must make the documents referred to in section 26(1) of the Act available for inspection on reasonable notice at all reasonable times.

Commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights

15.—(1) The responsible financial officer for a relevant authority must, on behalf of the authority, ensure that commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights under regulation 9(1)(b) or 12(3)(a) (as the case may be), takes place on such a day that ensures that the period referred to in regulation 14(1) includes—

~~(a) the first 10 working days of June of the financial year immediately following the end of the financial year to which the statement relates, where that authority is a Category 1 authority; or~~

(b) the first 10 working days of July of the financial year immediately following the end of the financial year to which the statement relates, where that authority is a Category 2 authority.

Councils' Accounts: A Summary of Public Rights

The basic position

By law any interested person has the right to inspect a council's/meeting's accounts. If you are entitled and registered to vote in local council elections then you (or your representative) have additional rights to ask the appointed auditor questions about the council's accounts or object to an item of account contained within them.

The right to inspect the accounts

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year it must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. Having given the council reasonable notice of your intentions, you then have 30 working days to look through the accounting statements in the Annual Return and any supporting documents. By arrangement, you will be able to inspect and make copies of the accounts and the relevant documents. You may have to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts

You can only ask the appointed auditor questions about the accounts. The auditor does not have to answer questions about the council's policies, finances, procedures or anything else not related to the accounts. Your questions must be about the accounts for the financial year just ended. The auditor does not have to say whether they think something the council has done, or an item in its accounts, is lawful or reasonable.

The right to object to the accounts

If you think that the council has spent money that it should not have, or that someone has caused a loss to the council deliberately or by behaving irresponsibly, you can request the auditor to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law. You do this by sending a formal '*notice of objection*' to the auditor at the address below. **The notice must be in writing and copied to the council**. In it, you must tell the auditor why you are objecting and what you want the auditor to do about it. The auditor must reach a decision on your objection. If you are not happy with that decision, you can appeal to the courts.

You may also object if you think that there is something in the accounts that the auditor should discuss with the council or tell the public about in a '*public interest report*'. You must follow the same procedure as outlined in the previous paragraph. The auditor must then decide whether to take any action. The auditor does not have to, but usually will, give reasons for his/her decision and you cannot appeal to the courts. More information is available on the National Audit Office website (see contact details below).

You may not use this '*right to object*' to make a personal complaint or claim against your council. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or your solicitor. You may also be able to approach the Standards Committee of your local principal authority if you believe that a member of the council has broken the Code of Conduct for Members.

What else you can do

Instead of objecting, you can give the auditor information that is relevant to his/her responsibilities. For example, you can simply tell the auditor if you think that something is wrong with the accounts or about waste and inefficiency in the way the council runs its services. You should make it clear that you are providing information rather than making a formal objection. You do not have to follow any set time limits or procedures. The auditor does not have to give you a detailed report of any subsequent investigation, but will usually tell you the outcome.

A final word

Councils, and so local taxpayers, must meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved. The auditor will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts, you might have to pay for the action yourself.

Who should you contact?

For more detailed guidance on electors' rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication ***Council Accounts – a guide to your rights*** are available by calling the National Audit Office on 020 7798 7000 **or** downloading from the website https://www.nao.org.uk/	If you wish to contact your Council's appointed external auditor please write to: Cameron Waddell, Mazars LLP, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS

Local council name: Outwoods Parish Council

Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights

Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 234)

1. Date of announcement: 29.06.18 *(a)*

2. Each year the Council's/Meeting's *(b)* Annual Return is audited by an auditor appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounts to be audited and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them. For the year ended 31 March 2018 these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:

   (c) *Ellen Bird*
   opclerk@outwoodsparishcouncil.com
   01283 410171

   commencing on *(d)* 02.07.18

   and ending on *(e)* 10.08.18

3. Local Government Electors and their representatives also have:
   - the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and
   - the right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the Council/Meeting (f).

   The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose during the inspection period at 2 above.

4. The audit is being conducted under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the National Audit Office' Code of Audit Practice. Your audit is being carried out by:

   Mazars LLP, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS

5. This announcement is made by *(g))* Ellen Bird, Clerk and RFO

(a) Insert date of placing of this notice on your website.

(b) Delete as appropriate.

(c) Insert name, position and contact details of the Clerk or other person to whom any person may apply to inspect the accounts.

(a) And (e) The inspection period must include 2 July 2018 to 13 July 2018 inclusive and be 30 working days in total.

(f) Delete as appropriate

(g) Insert name and position of person placing the notice