

BREDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Bredfield Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

- The council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its November meeting.
- The November meeting of the council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.
- A Councillor is appointed to have responsibility for bank reconciliation checks.
- The parish council meets six times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the councillor with financial responsibility.
- The council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See attached Report.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:

- The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator.
- The Clerk is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances.
- The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks.
- The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

- All purchase of goods and payments for services are reported to the council for approval before being made.
- All payments are matched to the appropriate authority to purchase.
- Two members of the Parish Council must authorise each and every payment.
- The authoriser must consider each payment against the relevant council minute and the supporting invoice before approval.
- All authorisers must be members of the Council. Delegation is not permitted.

Income:

All income is received and banked in the council’s name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The council reviews its risk assessment annually in May and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council.

External Audit:

The council’s external auditors submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.

Chairman

RFO/Clerk

Approved and adopted by Bredfield Parish Council)

Meeting date: 31.03.25

BREDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims 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 a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE [Y/N]	COMMENTS – check documents and initial
Ensuring an up to date Register of Assets	Y	Completed. I reviewed the asset list and compared it with the last list.
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets	Y	Maintenance schedule added to asset list. Reserve reflects the non-yearly nature of maintenance.
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover	Y	Risk assessment conducted and published
Annual review of financial risk	Y	Reviewed
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations	Y	Standing Orders redrafted and adopted
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders	Y	Financial Regulations reviewed and redrafted and approved
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed	Y	Reviewed; financial statements produced for every meeting

Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Y	Councillor checks statements and expenditure prior to every meeting and produces report
Recording in the minutes or appendices of the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved	Y	Introduced during this Financial Year, and now recorded in Minutes
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted	Y	Included in Minutes
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked	Y	Confirmed by checks by Councillor and recorded in Minutes
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to District Council notification	Y	Checked and confirmed
Contracts of employment for staff Contract annually reviewed PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer	Y Y Y	Contract reviewed and Revised Contract agreed with Clerk and Council. PAYE and NI is managed by SALC
VAT correctly accounted for VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook	Y	Reported to Council
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council	Y	Recorded in Minutes and supporting Finance Reports
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council	Y	Recorded in Minutes and supporting Finance Reports
Compliance with DCLG Guide <i>Open & Accountable Local Government 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports</i>	Y	All decisions made by the Parish Council were done at Parish Council meetings and correctly recorded in the minute
Compliance with Local Transparency Code Of 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £500	Y	All payments are published in Minutes and supporting Financial statements which are published in the website
Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements Are the following in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit / Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices 	Y	Accessibility Policy reviewed and revised and policies in place and reviewed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention & Disposal Policies 		
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping	Y	Back up should be improved – Clerk should regularly take back ups of Minutes and supporting paperwork and keep separate from laptop.
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members’ Interests and Gifts of Hospitality	Y	Reviewed and confirmed
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members	Y	Reviewed
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Y	Reviewed

Date of review of system of Internal Controls 29 March 2025

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by: D J HEPPER [Parish Councillor]

Name.....Signature.....

Report submitted to Council (date).....

(minute reference)16/310325.....

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Next review of system of Internal Controls due: 31 March 2026

Additional comments by reviewer: