

Thursday, 19 October 2023

Cllr J Wright
Chairman of
Hougham Parish Council
C/O Mrs L Frances
18 Chapel Lane
Caythorpe
NG32 3EG



Dear Councillor Wright,

Thank you for asking me to conduct the Internal Audit for 2023/2024.

Your Clerk promptly provided me with all paperwork requested and I was able to view other documents to complete paper trails and Governance checks on the council's website.

Listed are my recommendations and observations, mainly for transparency purposes and to protect the council. I have put them in order of priority to help your Clerk, it is not expected for these to be dealt with overnight.

Please contact me if you, the Council or your Clerk have any questions.

1. On the Parish Council website, there is no link to the Members register of interests on the District Council's website and the Members interest forms on the District Council website are out of date, they are before the May election
2. As part of the Councils Risk Management, it is good practice for the Chairman to hold a sealed envelope with a list of all passwords and other important information. This should be updated as & when passwords or information is changed and the previous in-tact envelope passed back to the clerk. This envelope should only be opened in an emergency and with another member of the council.
3. I note that an item has been listed under section 137, this should only be used when there are no other powers for a council to spend. A council has a power to provide and spend on celebrations and other events for the community under the [LGA 1972 s.145\(1\)\(a\)](#)
Some powers are listed in the Good Councillors Guide or in Local Councils Explained book (if the council has one), I have attached a list that might help but if not on there then an internet search normally finds what you are looking for.
4. The agenda for the Annual meeting of the Parish Council should always start with the election of the Chairman
5. Council assets should be checked on a regular basis and a record kept with the date checked and by whom. This ensures that assets are kept in a safe condition and should someone make a claim it helps protect the council against negligence
6. Does the council ask for a copy of public liability for all its contractors? If not, this is something that should be done to protect the council.

Mrs Victoria Clark, Clark's Clerical Service, 2 Frith Bank, Boston, PE22 7BA
Mobile: 07770 927 309 Email: clarksclericalservice@secretary.net
Facebook: @ClarksClericalService

7. The link to the [asset register](#) on the Council's website goes to "page not found"
8. The Council's Standing orders on the website have different [dates](#) showing
9. On the website, the Annual Parish Meeting agenda & minutes are within the council documents, this is not a council meeting and should have a heading just for that, normally under Parish Information.
10. On the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting other than the Chairman and Clerk, all others attending including councillors are members of the public or residents not members of the council and the seating should reflect this. Details can be found under Council Procedures on the LALC website.
11. For transparency this Chairman's report and past reports to the Chairman from the Internal Auditor should be added to the Audit documents
12. To help your Clerk, the council might like to check the layout, links and information on the website so that any broken links, missed information or duplicated information can be corrected by your webmaster.

Thank you for asking me to conduct your Internal audit and please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

V. Clark

Mrs Victoria Clark