

Report of the annual internal audit of Sustead with Bessingham and Metton Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2025

I confirm that I have acted independently and on the basis of the assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the relevant period.

I have followed the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Appendix 9 – An Approach to internal audit testing'.

I have completed the Annual internal audit report 2024/25 and agreed with all the objectives.

Although overall I am in agreement that the council has complied with their responsibilities, and have indicated as such on the Annual Internal Audit Report, I would make the following observations:

No invoice seen in respect of Eon direct debit £68.22 (Don't forget for VAT reclaim) and not included in payment approvals in minutes.

Although the cashbook has been published November 2024, I cannot see any bank reconciliation, although minutes state this was received by Councillors. Cashbook reconciliation January 2025, bank balance is £9167.30 but reconciliation says £9167.23.

VAT rebate recorded in the minutes £1800.65, amount reclaimed / cashbook £1860.06

When checking the link to the Councillor Register of Members Interest Form – I was unable to find the document in respect of Cllr A Parker at ~~Breckland~~ **NORTH NORFOLK**.

Additional salary payment in respect of extraordinary meeting – Although the payment was approved in the minutes, I cannot find any minute to consider / approve payment of Clerk's additional hours – contract confirms 'subject to Council approval.....' I am unable to verify hours claimed for additional meeting.

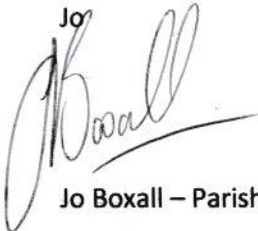
I note that all the financial policies have been reviewed, when checking these policies on the website I got 'error code 404 This page could not be found'. I would recommend checking links on the website as several seem to be broken. I could not see that Standing Orders has been reviewed this financial year and policy on website doesn't confirm when it was last reviewed.

It is noted in the minutes that an anonymous grant of £25000 will be received but only £12500 recorded in the cashbook. Is this being paid in two instalments?

Accounting statement box 8 should agree with the bank reconciliation £22221.29. I query staff costs (box 4) £1901 as this includes £66.20 overpayment which was refunded to the Parish Council.

Regards

Jo



Jo Boxall – Parish Clerk

White House, Pettywell, Reepham, Norfolk, NR10 4RN

T: 01603 879480 email: jo@just-jo.co.uk

Response to Internal Audit Observations, May 2025

Eon invoice for £68.22 downloaded and added to financial files

November 2024 cashbook has now been uploaded to the website.

Auditors note wrong way around January bank balance was £9,167.23 and bank reconciliation has now been amended and reuploaded to the website. The 7p difference was an incorrectly input cheque 100512 on 13/05/25 of £2,631.40 which should have been £2,631.47.

VAT amount on cashbook is correct. VAT amount in minutes is incorrect, clerk error.

Cllr Parker had completed Councillor Register of Members Interests form when becoming a Councillor in May 2025 and returned to the Clerk. The forms does not seem to have been received by North Norfolk District Council. Clerk emailed Cllr Parker on 30 April to advise of this and sent him a link to complete the form directly online. Cllr Parker asked to advise Clerk when this has been done as being a Councillor is conditional on completing this.

Verbal approval given for additional salary payment and Clerk, as new, inexperienced clerk, did not realised that Council approval of this as an additional payment should have been minuted.

Financial Regulations have been uploaded to the website but need reviewing and will be on August agenda for review.

Standing Orders do not appear to have been reviewed for sometime and will be updated for current legislation for review at August meeting.

All links on website to be checked.

Confirmed to Auditor that Anonymous grant was being made in two instalments and should have been minuted thus.

Accounting statement box 4 amended, after discussion with Auditor, reduced by £66.20 overpayment re PAYE tax to £1,834.80 and other expenditure increased by £66.20.

Accounting statement box 8 amended to £22,221.29, £60 difference being two uncashed cheques for £30 each.

Bank reconciliation

This reconciliation should include **all** bank and building society accounts, including short term investment accounts. It **must** agree to Box 8 in the column headed "Year ending 31 March 20xx" in Section 2 of the AGAR – and will also agree to Box 7 where the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis

Name of smaller authority:

SUSTEAD WITH BESSINGHAM AND METTON

County area (local councils and parish meetings only):

NORFOLK

Financial year ending 31 March 2025

Prepared by

HELEN PELL - Clerk/RFO

Date:

15.04.25

	£	£
Balance per bank statements as at 31/3/25		
Community Account	20,287.99	
Business Account	1,993.30	
		22,281.29
Petty cash float (if applicable)		-
Less: any unpresented cheques as at 31/3/25 (normally only current account)		
Cheque number 100541	(30.00)	
100531	(30.00)	
		(60.00)
		-
Net balances as at 31/3/25 (Box 8)		22,221.29

Explanation of variances – pro forma

Name of smaller authority: **SUSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**
County area (local councils and): **NORFOLK**

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all Blue highlighted boxes

Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200);
- New from 2020/21 onwards: variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year;

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses trigger below based on figures input. DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	9,054	17,787				Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	2,730	3,930	1,200	43.96%	YES		Precept raised to cover Village Hall costs, such as utilities, having recently come back to Parish Council
3 Total Other Receipts	18,023	17,835	-388	2.15%	NO		
4 Staff Costs	1,300	1,901	601	46.23%	YES		New Clerk from 23.9.24 on hourly rate of 2 hours per week rather than annual salary. Starting scale point advised by NPTS. Annual NALC pay rise applied. One extraordinary meeting paid as additional quarterly salary payment.
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
6 All Other Payments	10,720	15,230	4,510	42.07%	YES		£13,030 Village Hall renovations, £750 VH utilities
7 Balances-Carried Forward	17,787	22,221				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	17,787	22,221				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and	357	358	1	0.28%	NO		
10 Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable