

**REPORT BY THE INTERNAL AUDITOR TO ST CUTHBERT WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL  
PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2025- 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2026  
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026**

I confirm I have on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 undertaken an internal audit for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025– 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 in accordance with the Account and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 as outlined in the relevant sections of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils” A Practitioners’ Guide (England) March 2025.

Detailed below are the audit findings.

**1. Proper Bookkeeping**

The Council operates Receipts and Payments Accounts as required by the Regulations. The Council Accounts are maintained in the Scribe software package. All are reconciled to the Council bank account. There were no arithmetical errors and there is a clear audit trail and a checking system for data input into the computerised records.

**2. Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Policy Documents**

The Council has comprehensive governance documents and policies which are current and displayed on the website. Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted – Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Minute 57.

**3. Invoice procedure**

There is a clear audit trail from the financial records, supported by invoices and all payments are authorised and duly recorded in the minutes.

A random sample of expenditure was checked for accuracy and compliance with Financial Regulations and the principles of Best Value. All were compliant.

**4. VAT**

Vat has been recorded and a sum of £1502.96 identified as the debtor for the period 1<sup>st</sup>.April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. This reconciles to the Scribe accounts.

**5. Sct 137 Payments**

St Cuthberts Without Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence status.

The Council has a statutory requirement to maintain ‘a separate account’ of expenditure under Local Government Act 1972 section 137 by the inclusion in the cashbook of a separate accounting column.

**6. Risk Management/Risk Policy Document**

The Council reviews all risks to which the council is exposed. A report features frequently in the Minutes of the Council. The Risk Management documents are received, approved and adopted annually.

## **7. Internal Financial Controls**

There is clear evidence by checks, dates and signatures on relevant documents e.g. invoices, financial statements, schedule of payments, bank reconciliations that the Council is in control of the use of public monies. The Council at the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 agreed the appointment of the Internal Auditor - Minute 8b. and reviewed and adopted the Internal Audit Policy - Minute No 9.

## **8. Register of Interest**

Members have duly completed the Register of Interests and fulfilled their obligation to update the details annually.

## **9. Budgetary Control/Precept**

A correct budget process is in place, and the budget is monitored monthly.

The accounting method enables immediate identification of monthly and cumulative spends to each budget heading. The financial reports presented by the RFO enable the council to readily address any budget under/overspends and if necessary, make the relevant virements. The Council at the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025– Minute No.77 set a precept of £24,000 for the financial year 2026-2027.

## **10. Cash Balances at the Bank - General Reserves**

The balance of cash held at the bank of £45256 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 is adequate to meet the future budgeted undertakings of the council. Held within the balance are clearly earmarked reserves of £23337.7. The General Reserve is £21918.46.

External Audit advises that General Reserves should equate to three to twelve months net revenue expenditure.

## **11. Income Controls**

All income is properly recorded, and promptly banked and adequate measures are in force to ensure security. No cash income

## **12. Cash Payments/Clerk's Expenses.**

The Clerk's expenses are reported to the relevant meeting and VAT if included is recorded to the appropriate budget heading.

## **13. Payroll Controls**

All PAYE/NIC records are properly operated and up to date with all returns being made to HMRC to meet time scales. Payroll is undertaken externally, and accuracy verified by the Clerk/RFO

## **14. Asset Control**

There exists an extensive register of all material assets in control of the Council. Community assets are recorded at the nominal value of £1 as required by the Audit Regulations. The Asset Register records acquisitions and disposals (if appropriate) for the 2026 AGAR.

**15. Bank Reconciliation**

Bank statements are reconciled to financial records on receipt of monthly bank statements. The signature of a member verifies the accuracy of the documents.

**16. Year End Procedures**

The accounts are compiled on a Receipts and Payments method as required by the Audit Regulations

**17. Compliance with regulations and proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.**

The Council has a compliant website and all councillors have a .org email. There is a Data Protection Policy and the council has adopted an IT Policy meeting March 2026 – Minute No. 113.

**AGAR 2024-2025**

Regulation 15(2) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to publish a Notice of Public Rights of inspection of accounts for a period of thirty days which must include the first 10 working days in July.

The notice was posted on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025, with the period of inspection being 3rd June 2025– 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require a Council to publish, as soon as reasonably practicable, after the conclusion of the audit, a statement on the website that the audit has been completed.

The clerk has undertaken the requirement and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, (AGAR) with all attendant information was publicly displayed upon receipt from the External Auditor, on the Council notice board and website – [www.stcuthbertswithout.org.uk](http://www.stcuthbertswithout.org.uk), 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025 ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Regulations.

The Council was notified of the return of the completed AGAR at the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025 – Minute No. 60.

I confirm that St Cuthbert’s Without Parish Council is fully compliant with all regulations and statutory undertakings.

In concluding the report, I wish to express my appreciation to the Clerk/RFO for his thorough preparation and availability of all documents required, which expedited the audit process as a result of accurate and transparent records.



**Georgina D Airey –Internal Auditor. 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**