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Independent Internal Audit Service for Parish and Town Councils

28th January 2021

The Chairman
C/o Melbourn Parish Council
The Hub
30 High Street
Melbourn Cambs SG8 6DZ

Dear Sir

INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDIT FOR Mid Year 2020/2021

In the time allotted it is not possible for me to inspect all Council documents available on your Council web site, but a spot check has confirmed the following issues. I have clarified most of them with the Clerk by a zoom meeting, but of course I have not been able to inspect any original council documents. I would also remind the Council that it is not in my remit to check the accuracy of the Council accounts.

Early indications are that we will still be working under some form of lock-down regulations in May and we have to hope that the External Auditors will issue formal guidance on how the year end independent audit and the signing of the AGAR papers is to be carried out. In the absence of this I am preparing to undertake the following format:

- Each Council will complete the year end papers and approve them at a meeting on zoom, together with the AGAR forms shortly after year end.
- Arrangements will be in place for the Chairman and RFO/Clerk to physically sign them.
- Once signed, these together with accompanying reports. will be sent to me together with a stamped addressed envelope.
- Upon receipt I will then contact the Clerk and arrange a date to undertake an audit of documents available on line or that have been emailed or posted to me. We will then have a pre-arranged zoom meeting to discuss any issues I may have.
- I will then complete my report and sign my section of the AGAR form.
- I will post back the AGAR etc and email my report direct to the Clerk.

I am already hearing indications that there is not likely to be any extension to the date of submission to the external auditors of these papers so I would advise that the Parish Council should consider making arrangements on how the AGAR and accompanying papers will be approved and signed by all parties.

Yours faithfully
Jacquie Wilson (Mrs)
Director

REPORT AND OBSERVATIONS TO MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

From my previous reports I note that:

THE COUNCIL

The Parish Council is due for election in May 2022. The Council has 15 seats with currently 4 vacancies.

INSURANCE

Quotes are being sought to revalue all buildings in the next financial year.

COUNCIL POLICIES

These are now fully documented on the web site.

Observations from this mid year audit,

EMPLOYMENT

I understand from various documents on the web site that:

- Simon Crocker left employment as Clerk in September 2020
- Claire Littlewood has been appointed as new Clerk in November 2020
- Sophie Marriage has now been appointed as Assistant Clerk
- Gabrielle Van Poortvlist has still remained in post as RFO since 2018

The Clerk has assured me that the correct recruitment procedure has been undertaken for the two new staff appointments by the HR Working Party. However, please note that it is my understanding that the Corporate Body of the Full Council of Melbourne Parish Council who are the employers, even Committees cannot be delegated these particular decisions.

Please also note that a Working Party cannot make decisions for the Full Council only recommend their proposals. So, once the HR Working Party have chosen their candidate a formal proposal must be put before the Full Council to approve the appointment. Once drafted letters of appointment, contracts, job descriptions, etc should also be approved and signed by the Full Council. The HR Working Party must formally notify the Full Council of any other changes to staff matters etc.

ETHICAL CODE

There is ample evidence in the minutes on the web site of councillors correctly declaring interests and the appropriate action they took within meetings.

COUNCIL POLICIES

There is ample evidence in the mintes that council policiies are being regularly updated and re-adopted by committees.

Also it would appear that contractual procedure is also being followed satisfactorily.

ALLOTMENTS

Notice has been given of increase in the rents to ensure these remain viable.

INSURANCE

The Council policy has been renewed through Came & Co. for £7,562 and data breach cover is included within the policy.

ASSET REGISTER

This is currently not published on the web site and will be made available for my inspection at the year end visit.

BURIAL GROUND

The Clerk reported that the management of this asset is running smoothly.

Jacquie Wilson (Mrs) Director