

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Stanford Rivers Parish Council – 2025/2026

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and the guidance and instruction in the Practitioners Guide 2025. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £32,162.57 Expenditure: £89,898.52 Reserves: £29,489.72

2026 AGAR Completion:

Section One: **Yes – to be approved by council**

Section Two: **Yes (draft figures) – to be approved by council**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026: **Yes**

Certificate of Exemption: **No**

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

All were found to be in order. LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts.

The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced.

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Tenders
Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **6/3/2025 (Ref:)**

Financial Regulations in place: **Yes**

Reviewed: **6/3/2025 (Ref:)**

VAT reclaimed during the year: **Yes**

Registered: **No (VAT126)**

Submission Period:	Amount:
<i>01/04/2024-31/03/2025</i>	<i>£2,443.95</i>
<i>01/04/2025-31/03/2026</i>	<i>£9,022.25</i>

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General Power of Competence: **Yes** Adopted: 15/5/2025
Minute Ref: P14.1343

There were no tenders during the year that exceeded the £30,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold.

Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council
Compliance with Data Protection regulations

Risk Assessment document in place: **Yes**
Data Protection registration: **Yes** Ref: ZC157977

Insurance was in place for the year of audit (valid 31/3/2025 – 30/3/2026). The Council have declared that they have not carried out a review of the Risk Assessment or Internal Controls during the year of audit.

Statement of Internal Controls in place: **Yes** – last reviewed 6/3/2025

Recommendation: *To undertake and minute a review of the Risk Assessment and Internal Controls during the year of audit.*

The Council have satisfactory internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Fidelity Cover: £250,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Transparency

Compliance with **Assertion 10:**

Website link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/>

Privacy Policy published: **Yes**
Link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/>

IT Policy in place: **Yes**
IT Policy published: **Yes**
Link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/policies-documents/>

Data Protection Policy in place: **Yes**
Data Protection Policy published: **Yes**
Link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/assets/documents/gdpr-policy-2025>

Publication Scheme published: **Yes**
Link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/a/55452815-55452954>

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Accessibility Statement in place: [Yes](#)
Accessibility Statement published: [Yes](#)
Link: <https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/>

Generic Council email addresses for officials in place: [Yes](#)

The Council have met the requirements of Assertion 10.

Under **The Accounts & Audit Regulations** councils must publish on their website:

Audited AGAR:

[2025 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes](#)

[2025 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes](#)

[2025 Annual Return, Section Three Published – Yes](#)

Notice of period for the exercise of public rights (2025)

[Published – Yes](#)

<https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/a/54259555-56519231>

Notice of Conclusion of Audit (2025)

[Published – Yes](#)

<https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/a/54259555-57586485>

Period of Exercise of Public Rights

Publication Date: [16/6/2025](#) Start Date: [17/6/2025](#) End Date: [28/7/2025](#)

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** council are required to display AGARs for the five years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-2025 on their website.

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3 (Audited)
2020 - 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes
2021 - 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes
2022 - 2023	Yes	Yes	Yes
2023 - 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes
2024 - 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Council have met the publication requirements.

Under the **Transparency code for smaller authorities**, smaller councils with income/expenditure over £200,000 should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

It is best practice, rather than a requirement for Councils with income or expenditure between £25,001 - £200,000 to follow the Transparency Code for Councils over £200,000. The Council have embraced the Transparency Code:
<https://www.stanforddrivers-pc.gov.uk/transparency-code/>

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Budgetary controls
supporting documents

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and

Precept: £23,462 (2025-2026)

Date: 9/1/2025 (Ref: P14.1284)

Precept: £24,372 (2026-2027)

Date: 8/1/2026 (Ref: P14.1434)

Satisfactory budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and a sample of income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Fees were reviewed at a meeting held on 6/3/2025 (Ref: P14.1307).

Cash

Associated books and established system in place

There have been no cash payments made during the year of audit.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment and pensions

PAYE System in place: **Yes**

Employer's Reference: **120/GA95180**

P60s issued: **Yes**

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Payroll is outsourced. Supporting paperwork is in place and a P60 has been produced as part of the year end process.

Eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme. The last date of re-declaration of compliance was 10/3/2024.

It is noted that the Council last undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 9/1/2025 (Ref: 1284).

Contracts of Employment and subsequent salary agreements are in place for all staff employed by the Council.

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at cost value/insurance value. The total value of assets are recorded at £91,983. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.

Bank Reconciliation

Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Bank Balances at 31 March were confirmed as:

<i>Unity Trust</i>	<i>xxxx4788</i>	<i>£25,802.09</i>
<i>Unity Trust</i>	<i>xxxx4775</i>	<i>£3,687.63</i>

The Council had outstanding (PWLB) loans with the UK Debt Management Office (DMO) of £13,684.25 at the year end. [verified by the 31st March statement].

Reserves

General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council have adequate general reserves of £15,349.55 and have identified earmarked reserves of £14,140.17 in their year end accounts.

Year-end procedures

Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End of year accounts are prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis.

Sole Trustee

The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

The 2024-2025 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 15/5/2025 (Ref: P14.1344).

The Council have declared that a review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit has not been carried out during the year of audit.

Heelis & Lodge were appointed as Internal Auditor at a meeting held on 9/1/2025 (Ref: P14.1290).

External Audit

The Council formally approved the 2025 AGAR at a meeting of the full Council held on 15/5/2025 (Ref: P14.1347).

The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 11/9/2025 (Ref: P14.1397).

The following matters were brought to the attention of the Council:

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review:

- Section 2, Boxes 7 and 8 of the prior year are incorrect due to a transposition error and both boxes should read £71,881

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 15/5/2025. The first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for their assistance during the course of the audit work and the quality of documentation provided for the audit.



Heather Heelis
Heelis & Lodge

19 June 2026

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