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Geoff Davis

Clerk to Monkton Combe Parish Council

Tregonhawk, South Stoke,

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Ref: Internal Audit Monkton Combe Parish Council

26th April 2018

Dear Parish Council,

I conducted an internal audit for the Parish Council on 25th April 2018. Overall the system examined is addressing the requirements, but, I have the following concerns to raise with the Council.

Firstly, from 2017 Internal Audit.

Risk Assessment Procedures (C)

1. *The Risk Assessment procedure with respect to the play equipment inspection regime was not updated and approved by the Parish Council when it was planned to do so, and appears not to have been done subsequently. There were good reasons for the delay, but with those now resolved, the procedure must be updated and approved as soon as possible.*

Satisfied this has been addressed

2. *The Risk Assessment procedure shows periodic checking of equipment and facilities under the responsibility of the Parish Council, by councillors and others. However, there is no paper trail to show that these have been undertaken, when, and by whom. In the event of a problem with equipment, it would be difficult for the Council to demonstrate that it had followed its procedures. I recommend to the Parish Council that a record of equipment visual checks done since the last period is made under a standing item at PC meetings. Perhaps the Parish Matters & Works is the most appropriate standing item for such a process.*

Regrettably not yet addressed. A standing item on the PC agenda is still my recommendation for this check.

3. *The Millennium Bridge does not appear to be specifically included under the inspection regime. As bridges are vulnerable to sudden stress conditions when there is heavy rain or floods and material coming down stream at force, it is pertinent to ensure inspections are made at critical times, and that this can be demonstrated.*

This has been addressed, although as with point 2 here, it is not yet demonstrable that it is being inspected.

Financial Regulations (B) & Salaries to Employees (G)

I recommend that the arrangement with Ian Croker is formalised in an appropriate fashion. It could be a programme of planned work, an agreed schedule, a regular invoice cycle or a timesheet where recent activity can be marked. Condition inspections of facilities and equipment could be incorporated into the schedule. There appears to be no contract either of employment or agreed work schedule to support the village cleaning activity.

This has been addressed to an acceptable degree, although it remains to be seen whether B&NES will concur. I understand Mr Croker has been offered both a contract of employment and a pension arrangement and has declined.

2018 Audit recommendations

Risk Assessment

- Implement the inspection regime confirmation checks as recommended in 2017, by recording checks done in the inter-meeting period in the minutes of the subsequent meeting.

Governance/ Transparency

- Backups and security of data – it is recommended that the off-site data security (Chairman's copy of passwords and important documents) information is checked for currency periodically – perhaps annually or on some other suitable cycle.

GDPR compliance

- Confirm that current publicly available contact information on Council publications, (primarily the website but also any other communications) is in accordance with GDPR principles. If councillors agree that they can be contacted directly rather than through the Clerk, it is recommended that parish council email addresses are used, and that other personal details are not published without explicit consent.

Employees

- If Mr Croker is satisfied with the current arrangements then the Council can be seen to have addressed the requirements with regard to formalisation of his work practices. It is important to be able to evidence that options for employment and pensions have been offered and declined.
- The salary for the Clerk is on the appropriate scale system and uplifts are issued bi-annually. Scale point for clerks is applicable to the size of the Council area. I recommend that the Council request an assessment from ALCA (Avon Local Councils Association) to establish if the scale point is appropriate for the size of the Council.

Thank you for inviting me to perform your internal audit again, I feel that the Council's processes are improving steadily and am satisfied they are on a firm footing for the future.



Sarah Richardson
26 April 2018