

THE
OKEHAMPTON
ACCOUNTANTS

NIGEL WAYNE & CO

Parish Councillors
Sampford Courtenay Parish Council
C/o Higher Town
Sampford Courtenay
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 2SX

Our Ref: Sampfo01
Date: 6th May 2021

Dear Parish Councillors

Internal Audit for the year ended 31 March 2021

We have now completed the internal audit report for Sampford Courtenay Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2021. Our work has highlighted the following points which we thought should be brought to your attention.

By way of explanation I would mention that the burdens for compliance placed on the holders and users of public money are very high - far higher than is the case for the equivalent size of private person or business. It is a fact that PC's are the guardians and trustees responsible for the public money under their care, and the nature of my reporting has to be constructed in that context. It is also the case that the 'rule book' which applies to SCPC is the same as for councils which are far larger and have much larger budgets. I'm sure that this is taken into account when official reviews take place, but I don't have that flexibility so all the comments below are based on the level of compliance with the 'rule book' as provided.

Duplicated cheques re-written

It was noted in the year that there were a couple of cheques that were re-written as the original cheques were rejected. These were as follows:

Sooz Materials £832.47
WDDB £65.77

The cashbook showed entries for the original cheque, together with the replacement cheque and income to reflect the original cheque not being presented. These duplicates should not be included on the income and expenses figures on the accounting statements of the return. Therefore the revised figures for boxes 3 and 6 should read as follows:

Box 3 (Total other receipts)	£20,844
Box 6 (All other payments)	£12,955

Nigel K Wayne & Co Ltd. Chartered Accountants, trading as THE OKEHAMPTON ACCOUNTANTS

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Assets

The two new assets purchased in the year should be recorded on the asset register at cost of £233.17 and £108.95. This is a minor discrepancy of £2 as you have recorded on the asset list as £240 and £100. Based on the asset list you have provided I calculate that box 9 (total fixed Assets plus long term investments and assets) should be £72,988.

What may give the external auditor reason for query is the addition of another bus shelter and public toilets to the asset register. You might be asked to provide explanation as to why these have not appeared before.

Church Donation Complaint

I have been made aware an issue regarding the church donation and make the following comments on this issue bearing in mind that I am not a trained lawyer, and not expected to be a legal expert in Parish Council finances.

I have reviewed the payments in the light of common sense and in conjunction with the objectives of the internal audit report by comparison to the Financial Regulations covering the councils finances.

The pandemic was not foreseen when the regulations were drawn up, so it is hardly surprising that incidents occurred which are outside the normal operation of the PC. In respect of this payment, I would observe:-

- 1) The payments made were in compliance with the council's financial regulations to the extent possible
- 2) The payments made were duly approved in accordance with the council's regulations.
- 3) There is some doubt and some conflicting views about the application of the 1894 act being superceded by 2 subsequent pieces of legislation
- 4) The payment was not from Public Funds but from privately raised donations so it is not clear that the 1894 act applies to this payment.

I recommend that you consider a referral to a 3rd Party body specialising in the activities of Parish Councils such as DALC, or even NALC in order to put the matter to rest permanently.

I hope you find this feedback useful, but if there is any you wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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