Kelvindale
Chapel Lane
Knockin Heath
Oswestry
Shropshire
SY10 8EB

Telephone 01691 - 682715
e-mail:- bt2008@btinternet.com

12th September 2025

Woore Parish Council

Ladies and Gentlemen

I have again been appointed as your Internal Auditor and am employed by the Council to conduct such tests as are agreed and are sufficient to enable me to complete the Internal Auditor's Report contained within the Audit Commission's Annual Return Form for the appropriate financial year.

My report is based on the Guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accounting Guidance (JPAG). Whilst the tests I have made are taken from the Practitioners' Guide, they are relevant to the various headings on the Annual internal audit report. I have given my rationale for the answers given on that report.

A. **Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year**.

Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year. The Council now uses an accounts package and so the records are maintained, are up to date, regularly balanced and the reconciliation of the records and the bank statement is regularly agreed by the council and minuted. The books are made up to 31st March 2025 and were audited by me on 17th June 2025.

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

The council's financial regulations have been met. I checked a sample of the Income and also the invoices paid. Payments were supported by invoices; all expenditure was approved, and VAT was or will be properly accounted for. I tested a sample of the payment transactions and found them to be satisfactory. VAT on payments has been identified and recorded separately. The Standing Orders are reviewed annually, the last occasion being May 2024. The Financial Regulations were also similarly reviewed at the May 2024 meeting of the Council, for both see minute 24012.

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

The Council has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these. The Risk Assessment policy was discussed and approved by the council at their May 2024 meeting under reference 24012 and it is reviewed annually. In addition, all the existing policies/protocols were adopted by the full Council in May 2024 see minute 24012. The Council's reserves follows the rule of being equivalent to 6 months routine expenditure and I am aware from the minutes that the council do reference their reserves in the risk assessment and also financial regulations. The reserves are also covered in the budget discussions yearly and reserves form part of budget calculations. I have checked the budget for 2024-25, the agreed budget for 2025-26 and also the Monies available that is calculated with reserves in mind.
The existing Insurance cover runs from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025. This item was discussed by the council at their May 2023 meeting, see the very comprehensive minute 24021. The insurance is a three year contract.
In addition the Council re-appointed three of the Councillors, to continue in the role of cheque signatories.

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored and reserves were appropriate.

A comprehensive budget for 2025-26 was drawn up and was discussed by the Council and a final budget was agreed and approved by the full Council at their December 2024 meeting ref. 24105. A precept figure was agreed and the meeting felt that in the current financial climate an increase in the precept was undesirable. The precept was set at £31250. See minute ref 24105. The budget is monitored quarterly and a report prepared for the councillors. The unrestricted reserves of the Council are adequate and appropriate, see item C. above.

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

All income has been received, is properly recorded and promptly banked where applicable. The recorded precept and Neighbourhood Fund monies agree to the County Council authority's notification, and I have checked a number of the credit entries. The council does not deal in cash or near cash items. VAT has been properly accounted for and is claimed annually. A refund of the VAT to the 31st March 2024 has been submitted and repayment has been received. A further claim to 31st December 2024 totalling £5323 was made in view of the large amount of VAT paid and repayment of this was received in February 2025. Repayment progress is monitored by the Clerk/RFO.

F. The Council does not deal in Petty Cash.

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

The existing clerk has a Contract of Employment, which is based on the NALC model. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied and payments to HMRC are up to date. The Clerk's increase in salary was duly approved and minuted.

H. **Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained**.

The Asset register is complete, and its accuracy and maintenance have been reviewed by the full Council at their May 2024 meeting see minute 24021. The council does not have an investment register as it has no investments.

I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

Periodic and year end reconciliations are carried out monthly and these have been checked, approved by the council and signed by the Chairman. I have examined all these checks and all have been duly minuted.

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis, (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis, a printout from the accounts package produced, agreed to the bank statements, and supported by an adequate audit trail. At the year-end there are no unexplained balancing entries in either reconciliation, The year-end accounts have been prepared on the correct accounting basis and the value of investments held is not applicable. At the year end, there are original bank statements for all accounts.

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. ***(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick ("not covered").***

The authority did not certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, and this heading is not covered.

L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The authority has published the required information on the website.

M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations ***(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023/24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).***

This exercise was correctly provided for and was evidenced by a notice on the website and public notice board.

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR. ***(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).***

The authority has complied with the requirements.

O. (For local councils only).
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

Not applicable.

Conclusion.

I have again marked all the categories on the internal audit form as conforming to the required standard on the basis that under risk management there is little, or no risk attached to the council from any of the comments I have made.

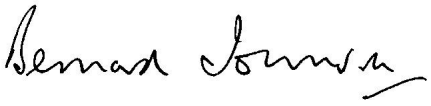
From my internal audit testing there is no evidence of any irregularities and a lot of work has continued to be put in by the clerk and the Council. I would like to thank the Clerk for the excellent way in which the accounts have been prepared, the minutes have been set out, and her overall control of the affairs of the Council, particularly with regard to the legislative side.

I was aware that the Clerk was shortly due to take maternity leave, and unfortunately this occurred before the Internal Audit was completed. However, now that she is back working as clerk, she has been in touch with the External Auditor and the circumstances for the delay in submitting the Internal Audit report and the Annual Governance statement have been explained to the auditors and they have agreed that now that I have completed my Internal Audit, the Councillors can complete their Governance statement and those documents will be sent to the external auditors.

I make no apology for again stating that I am well aware that the Councillors act in an unpaid capacity, but at the end of the day they are liable if anything goes wrong. I am well aware also that the clerk has been and will continue to keep an eye on the affairs of the Council so that there are no “shocks” at the end of the year and the Council can answer “Yes” to all the questions on their Governance Statement. This should be very re-assuring to the Council as a whole, and again I re-iterate that it is a privilege to undertake the Internal Audit for such a well-run Council.

My thanks to you all.

Yours faithfully



Bernard Townson
Internal Auditor
12th September 2025