



Redgrave Parish Council

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT

1. Scope of Responsibility

Redgrave Parish Council (RPC) is a local authority funded largely by public money. The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Regulation 3 of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015** requires local councils to ensure that financial management is adequate and effective, and that a sound system of internal control is in place. This system must facilitate the effective exercise of the Council's functions and include arrangements for the management of risk.

Internal controls are set up and maintained by the Parish Clerk, who is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). However, **Council members must ensure they understand those controls and are collectively responsible for checking that they are operated effectively.**

2. Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk of failure. It therefore provides **reasonable, not absolute assurance** of effectiveness. The system is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise risks to achieving RPC's policies, aims and objectives.
 - Evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and their potential impact.
 - Manage risks efficiently, effectively, and economically.
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3. RPC's Internal Controls

3.1 The Council

The Council, as a **corporate body**, is collectively responsible under statute for certain decisions which cannot be delegated, including setting the **precept** and approving the **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)** and governance statement.

The Council adopts and keeps under review **Financial Regulations** and **Standing Orders**, which together provide the framework for lawful decision-making and financial control.

The **Chair** facilitates meetings and ensures that decisions are lawful with the advice of the Clerk, but neither the Chair nor any individual member may make decisions on behalf of the Council.

The minutes of meetings are approved by the Council and signed by the Chair.

The Council approves the budget and precept for the following financial year by the end of December each year.

The Council must appoint an **independent Internal Auditor** and each year will:

- Confirm the scope of the internal audit.
- Approve the internal audit plan.
- Ensure that the plan takes proper account of the Council's risks and controls.
- Confirm that the tests proposed, together with inspections carried out by the Internal Auditor and the Council, are adequate and effective.

3.2 Officers

The Council employs a Parish Clerk who acts as **Proper Officer** and **Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**. The Clerk/RFO is responsible for day-to-day compliance with relevant laws, regulations, internal policies, and risk management. The Clerk/RFO ensures that procedures, control systems, and policies are maintained and applied.

Key duties of the Clerk/RFO include:

- Checking and authorising payments before presentation for Council approval.
- Providing statements of receipts and payments at each Full Council meeting.
- Presenting quarterly budget monitoring reports alongside bank reconciliations.
- Submitting required information to internal and external auditors on time.
- Arranging for statutory public notices to be displayed.
- Retaining all relevant financial records in accordance with the Council's **Records Management Policy** and best practice (Annual Return, VAT returns, PAYE/NIC, public notices, Fixed Asset Register, Risk Assessments, accounts and supporting information).

All other officers or contracted support staff work under the direction of the Clerk.

Financial and audit records containing personal data are managed in compliance with the **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**.

3.3 Internal Audit

The Council will appoint a suitably qualified and independent Internal Auditor each year.

The Internal Auditor's role is to review the adequacy of the Council's records, procedures, systems, internal controls, regulations, risk management, and reviews.

The Council confirms annually that the internal audit arrangements are **independent, objective, and proportionate to the size and risk of the authority.**

The Internal Auditor will provide a written report to the Council. This will be considered as a Full Council agenda item, with recommendations minuted and actions agreed.

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually by the Council.

3.4 External Audit

External Auditors are appointed in accordance with the statutory framework.

The External Auditor provides an annual report, which is presented to the Council. Any matters raised are considered by the Council, with actions minuted.

The Council publishes statutory public notices for the **exercise of electors' rights** and for the **conclusion of audit** in accordance with regulations.

4. Financial Regulations

The Council's **Financial Regulations** will be reviewed for relevance and updated annually in November, or sooner if required.

5. Risk Management

The Council will review its base risk assessment of land, property, and activities at least annually, and update it whenever circumstances change.

Procedures will be established to reduce or mitigate identified risks.

6. Review of Effectiveness

The Council will conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control in October.

The findings of the review will be reported to and considered by Full Council and minuted.

This policy will be published on the Council's website in an **accessible format (WCAG 2.2 AA compliant)** and made available in alternative formats on request.
