



STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL – 2025

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Sampfords Parish Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council since inception and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accords with proper practice.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council: The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its November / December meeting, when the full Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The full Council meets a minimum of six (6) times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Chairman and the Clerk.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer: The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the

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Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments: All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Members of the Council must sign every cheque/authorise online bank payments

Risk Assessments / Risk Management: The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit: The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of their:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management
- Reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit system is reviewed annually.

External Audit & Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR): When the Council has a gross income/expenditure of less than £25,000.00, it declares itself exempt from a Limited Assurance Review.

The Council submits a Certificate of Exemption to the External Auditors, publishes the entire AGAR on its website, and keeps a paper record in its archive to comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- the full Council;
- the Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;
- the Audit Commission, the Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible

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Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor. The Audit Commission issue an annual audit certificate;

- the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

Sign off:

Sampfords Parish Council Chairman:  **Date:** 15/11/2025

Sampfords Parish Council RFO:  **Date:** 15/11/2025