I have completed an internal audit of the accounts for Ingworth Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2026.

I would like to thank the Clerk/RFO for providing me with a clear and well-presented set of accounts for the Internal Audit.

Internal control	Test	Observations
Proper bookkeeping	Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?	yes
	Is the cashbook arithmetically correct?	yes
	Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	yes
Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and payment controls	Has the council formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations?	yes
	Date Standing Orders last reviewed	11th November 2023
	Date Financial Regulations last reviewed	26th February 2026
	Has a Responsible finance officer been appointed with specific duties?	The Clerk is the RFO
	Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased?	n/a
	Are payments in the cashbook supported by purchase orders, invoices, authorised and minuted?	Yes – see notes
	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	Yes – see notes
	Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	No column in cashbook for section 137 payments
	Have S137 payments been approved and included in the minutes as such?	No, see notes
Risk management arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	no
	Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment or review of their risk management scheme?	no
	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Insurance schedule not seen

Internal control	Test	Observations
	Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	yes
Budgetary controls	Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept and has this been minuted as being approved?	Annual budget published on website but no minute's ref approving budget / precept. see notes
	Has the precept been calculated from the budget and been approved?	No
	Does the budget include an actual completed year?	Yes, previous year
	Is actual expenditure against budget regularly reported to the council?	Yes, at every meeting
	Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	no
Income controls	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	yes
	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	See notes, precept amount not recorded in the minutes
	Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	n/a
Petty cash procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts?	n/a
	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	n/a
	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	n/a
Payroll controls	Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions?	Contract not seen
	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	Salary approved by Council
	Are salaries above the National Living Wage/Minimum Wage?	yes
	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes

Internal control	Test	Observations
	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	Yes,
Asset controls	Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	yes
	Are the assets and Investments registers up to date? When were these last reviewed?	Yes - see notes
	Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	Insurance schedule not seen
Bank reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account and is this reported to council?	yes
	Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion?	Yes – quarterly bank reconciliations are presented and signed
	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	no
	Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	n/a
Year-end procedures	Are year-end accounts prepared using the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)?	yes
	Do accounts agree with the cash book?	yes
	Has a year-end bank reconciliation been undertaken?	yes
	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	yes
	Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?	n/a
Procedural	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	No evidence of GPOC – see notes
	Have points raised on the last Internal Audit report been considered by council and actioned?	yes
Transparency: For smaller councils with turnover under £25,000	Minutes for whole year on website?	yes
	Agendas for whole year on website?	yes

Internal control	Test	Observations
	Payments over £100 detailed on website?	All payments are detailed in minutes and cashbook published on website
	Electors' rights advertised on website?	Not included in AGAR documentation on website for 2025/26 but dates approved in the minutes 28th May 2025
	Councillors' responsibilities detailed on website?	yes
	Last financial year's AGAR on website?	yes
	Land and building assets details on website? (Description, location, owner/leaseholder, date and cost of acquisition and present use)	n/a
Councils with charities only	Have Charities reported and accounted separately?	n/a
	Have the Charity accounts been independently audited?	n/a
	Have the Charity accounts and Annual Return been filed within the legal time limit?	n/a
General Data Protection Regulation (compliance from 25 May 2018)	Has the Council carried out an information audit?	yes
	Has the Council put in place a privacy notice and policy?	Yes, a privacy statement has been published on the website

Summary of my recommendations:

Minutes from the Parish Council meeting January 2025 approve the precept for 2025/26 in line with the budget but do not confirm what the figure is. I have seen remittance advice from NNDC confirming £2840 was paid / received.

It is noted that the agenda for the meeting November 27th 2025 includes an item under Finance (e) Budget 2026-27 but the signed minutes from the meeting (and those on the website) are missing this agenda item so I am unable to confirm that the Council has considered / agreed the budget for 26/27.

IT policy was approved on 27th November 2025 and a copy published on the website. It is noted that the Parish Council has a .Gov.uk website and contact email address.

IT policy, privacy statement, FOI Publication scheme and complaints policy need amending to show Council's new .gov.uk email address.

I am unsure why the minutes, which confirms the approval and authorisation of 'the schedule of payments for authorisation/ratification' schedule does not include direct debits (electricity and unity bank) but the signed payment schedules do?

Christmas tree – is this section 137 expenditure or does the Council hold the General Power of Competence (GPOC)? I could not find evidence in the minutes that GPOC is held. If section 137 expenditure it should be noted in the cashbook as such.

VAT – I have noted several invoices where VAT has been applied by the supplier but not recovered e.g. 3rd July 2025 – Website hosting £14, signage & stickers, printer paper and Microsoft office. It is noted that some invoices state VAT cannot be reclaimed but I am unsure why? If this is because a VAT number is not provided, a VAT invoice should be requested from the supplier (I have noted invoices on VAT reclaim for further consideration)

I note the asset register has increased by £535 but cannot see the reason for the increase. I could not see where the Council has reviewed the asset register during the financial year, '*Authorities need to apply a reasonable approach to asset valuation which is consistent from year to year.*' – For further guidance on Fixed Assets see Practitioners Guide 2025 5.57. Consider an asset register policy to clarify the Council's approach.

Financial Regulations – insurance and asset register must be reviewed annually; I could not see that this has taken place.

Financial risk management document requires review – February 2026.

Jo Boxall – 25th April 2026