SHOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Annual Internal Audit Report
(as required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972)
Financial Year to 31st March 2026

I have in the (virtual) presence of Mrs Jo Lloyd (Parish Clerk), inspected the parish council documents as appropriate, and line with, the scope of the audit requested.
Jo also acts as the RFO for the council.
Cllr. Sarah Sheldon is presently Chairperson of the Council.
I would like to thank the Clerk for providing me with all the information required to carry out this audit.

PREVIOUS INTERNAL / EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT

Internal Auditor: No recommendations made.
External Auditor: No matters raised.

ANNUAL PRECEPT & BUDGETARY PROCESS

A precept of £18,890 was approved (the Council meeting of 20th January 2025 refers).
There were no significant unexplained variances in the budget.
Explanations have been provided for all minor variances.
Some earmarked projects from 2024/25 were not carried out in that year and works (such as football pitch improvements) deferred to 2025/26.
Budgetary process is outlined in the Financial Regulations, Item 4.

BOOK KEEPING / TO INCLUDE END OF YEAR PROCEDURES

The bank is reconciled and reported on a monthly basis
(all reconciliations submitted for inspection).
The cashbook is well presented and monitored monthly.
Regular financial reporting (to include payments & invoices) is made by the Clerk at each meeting.

Banking is with Barclays (all statements and transfers provided).
End of Year Bank Reconciliation has been correctly prepared.
No petty cash is transacted.

ACCOUNTING & INTERNAL CONTROLS
(To include regular review of key policies)
Receipts & Payments is used as the basis for accounting.

Risk Management Plan – reviewed July 2025 and must be reviewed annually.
Financial Regulations – reviewed July 2025.
Standing Orders – reviewed July 2025.

The Council adopted an Internal Controls statement in March 2026.

The Council acts as sole managing trustee for the King George's Field charity.
The charity has separate banking arrangements and is kept "at arm's length" from the Council.
The charity's accounts were provided for information purposes although these will be audited separately.

PAYROLL / PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF PAYE / NIC / VAT
The Clerk's salary is paid in accordance with members approval and statutory guidance and documented in the relevant minutes.

Payslips have been provided for inspection.
PAYE and NIC have been self administered (using HMRC Basic Tools).

VAT has been properly applied and recorded.
The latest Return covers the period 01/04/2025 to 31/07/2025.

GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES
(To include Salaries & Terms of Employment)
The Council meets on the first Wednesday of the month (excepting August)

Council policies include:
Code of Conduct, General Data Protection, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Dignity At Work, Complaints, Media / Recording and Biodiversity.

Perhaps a Safeguarding policy should be adopted in addition?

The annual play inspection was carried out by Play Inspection Company

Ltd. in July 2025.

NPTS and NALC provide training for staff and councillors.

COMPLIANCE WITH ASSERTION 10: laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance

1. An IT policy was adopted in March 2026.
2. The Council has adopted a gov.uk domain website.
3. The Council's website provides accessible information which is regularly updated.
4. The Council has adopted a Website Accessibility statement.

It also has a Document & Data Retention policy.

The Clerk has undertaken Assertion 10 training (with NPTS).

Members should be encouraged to attend training on data protection and digital governance (if they have not already done so).

INSPECTION OF ASSETS REGISTER & INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The council's assets include:

King George V Playing Field (run by a charity) / includes a Portakabin clubhouse, a Toilet block, a Basketball pad and miscellaneous equipment;
Land at Shouldham Warren;
Land at Chalk Pit;
Shouldham Green;
the Village sign;
a wooden bench;
miscellaneous office equipment.

The Council covers all costs relating to play area maintenance and grounds maintenance (relating to the Playing Field).

I have inspected the council's Assets Register which is well presented (and updated 31st March 2026).
I would suggest that values are reviewed periodically to ensure that adequate levels of insurance remain in place.

Insurance provider is Ecclesiastical.
Policy due for renewal on 1st June 2026, quotes being sought.

CONCLUSIONS & ANY RECOMMENDATIONS
I would make no formal recommendations at this time.
This council is reaching good standards in both its governance and accounting procedures and the Parish Clerk is extremely efficient.
Kindly note the comments in italics.

I am satisfied that this parish council is functioning well and is fully discharging its legal and statutory responsibilities.

Accordingly, I have duly signed and completed the relevant section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 3) 2025/26.

ROBIN GOREHAM
(Internal Auditor) May 2026