

Dear Members

30 September 2015

**Walberswick Parish Council:
Report in the Public Interest**

We have the right to issue a report in the public interest about something we believe the Council should consider or the public should know about. We have decided to issue a report about the Council's failure to prepare an annual return about its finances and governance for the year ended 31 March 2015. We have the power to send a copy of this report to anybody we think appropriate. We have therefore sent a copy of the report to the Monitoring Officer at your District Council.

The Council must consider this report in public at a council held within one month of receiving it. At this gathering the Council must decide what action to take in response to our recommendations and inform us of these. The Council must also advertise that the recommendations have been accepted or not.

The Council is responsible for the use of funds raised by taxation. Citizens expect the Council to account for how it has used and protected those funds. The Council must prepare an annual return:

- Summarising its finances
- Giving assurances that it has a robust system of internal control to protect public funds; and
- reporting the results of the work of an internal auditor employed to check that its systems of control, work.

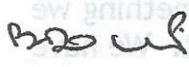
The Council, despite repeated requests, failed to submit an annual return. The District Council have also not assisted the Council to ensure it maintains a quorum which has further delayed the submission of the Annual Return. Any income received or expenditure made, if any, has not been subject to external scrutiny. Completing the annual return provides appropriate accountability at minimum cost to the Council.

The Council failed in an important statutory duty. And perhaps most importantly it failed to account to its taxpayers for the use and safeguarding of their money. That should not happen again.

We therefore recommend that the Council should:

- adopt a formal plan for preparation of the annual return by the statutory deadline of 30 June each year; and
- monitor performance against that plan.

Yours sincerely


BDO LLP

Copied to: Mrs H Slater, Monitoring Officer, Suffolk Coastal District Council