

# BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

I, Mrs Jayne Bunting, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Boughton Parish Council hereby declare that the status of the Accounting Statements for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are unaudited and that the Accounting Statements as published may be subject to change.

Signed: J Bunting

Dated: 28TH APRIL 2021

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 Part 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2021**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2021**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

## Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2021.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2020) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2021).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2021**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		✓
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		✓

\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.boughtonnorthants.co.uk

REGULARLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.			✓
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) - The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

*No petty cash*

*T/O > 25,000*

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

21/04/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

W J McL. Marshall CILCA NORTHANTS CALC LTD INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

*W J McL. Marshall*

Date

21/04/2021

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

# Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

**BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

27/04/2021

and recorded as minute reference:

21/24046

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

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PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

# Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

## BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	40,617	73,670	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.  Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	51,293	59,454	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	40,263	182,892	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	16,287	17,543	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	42,216	38,886	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	73,670	259,587	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	73,670	259,587	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	51,689	55,170	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.  N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.
		✓	

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

*J. Bunting*  
SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 27/04/2021

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

27/04/2021

as recorded in minute reference:

21/2404 J REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

*[Signature]*  
SIGNATURE REQUIRED

# Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

## 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

## 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2020/21

(Except for the matters reported below)\* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (\*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

## 3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify/do not certify\* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

# Bank reconciliation – pro forma

This reconciliation should include all bank and building society accounts, including short term investment accounts. It **must** agree 1 headed "Year ending 31 March 20xx" in Section 2 of the AGAR – and will also agree to Box 7 where the accounts are prepared on a basis. Please complete the highlighted boxes, remembering that unpresented cheques should be entered as negative figures.

Name of smaller authority: **BOUGHTON**

County area (local councils and parish meetings only): **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Financial year ending 31 March 2021

Prepared by (Name and Role): **Jayne Bunting Clerk & RFO**

Date: **09/04/2021**

		£	£
<b>Balance per bank statements as at 31/3/21:</b>			
	account 1	694.30	
	account 2	45,516.52	
	account 3	214,687.24	
[add more accounts if necessary]	account 4		
	account 5		
	account 6		
	account 7		
	account 8		
			260,898.06
Petty cash float (if applicable)			-
<b>Less: any unpresented cheques as at 31/3/xx (enter these as negative numbers)</b>			
	item 1	(311.30)	
	item 2	(1,000.00)	
[add more lines if necessary]	item 3		
	item 4		
	item 5		
	item 6		
	item 7		
	item 8		
			(1,311.30)
Add: any un-banked cash as at 31/3/21			
			-
<b>Net balances as at 31/3/21 (Box 8)</b>			<b><u>259,586.76</u></b>



## Explanation of variances – pro forma

Name of smaller authority: **BOUGHTON**  
 County area (local councils and **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**)  
 Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all **Blue highlighted boxes**

Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200);
- New from 2020/21:** variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year;
- a breakdown of approved reserves on the next tab if the total reserves (Box 7) figure is more than twice the annual precept rates & levies value (Box 2).

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses trigger below based on figures input, DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	40,617	73,670					
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	51,283	59,454	8,161	15.91%	YES		
3 Total Other Receipts	40,263	182,892	142,629	354.24%	YES		For the first time in several years there was an extraordinary increase in the precept (4.00%) in addition to the "volume benefit" of new housing at Buckton Fields giving an increase of £8,161 in 2020/21 over 2019/20. The balance of other receipts includes recovered VAT of £2,430, bank interest received of £68, a parish mowing contribution from Northamptonshire County Council of £353 and £338 donated to the Parish Council on the closure of Boughton Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
4 Staff Costs	16,287	17,543	1,256	7.71%	NO		
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
6 All Other Payments	42,216	38,886	-3,330	7.89%	NO		
7 Balances Carried Forward	73,670	259,587					The Reserves balance includes the £214,687 of CIL funds analysed above which has been received from Daventry District Council on a major housing development within Boughton parish. Balance
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	73,670	259,587			YES	VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED EXPLANATION REQUIRED ON RESERVES TAB AS TO WHY CARRY FORWARD RESERVES ARE GREATER THAN TWICE INCOME FROM LOCAL TAXATION/LEVIES	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and	51,689	55,170	3,481	6.73%	NO		
10 Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable

## Boughton Parish Council Accounts Financial Year 2020/2021 Variance Analysis

### Precept or Rates and Levies

For the first time in recent years there was an inflationary increase in the precept (4.8%) in addition to the "volume benefit" of new housing at Buckton Fields giving an increase of £8,161 in the precept. £7,500 was included in the budget for legal and planning costs expected to be incurred on advice concerning a major housing development and road infrastructure which will both significantly impact the parish. Election fees (£1,500) were included for the May 2020 Parish Council election and carried forward in reserves at the year end to May 2021 following the postponement of the elections.

### Other Receipts

£74,706 was received in April 2020 from Daventry District Council being the Parish Council's allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy on a major housing development within Boughton parish. A further £104,642 was received in October 2020. The CIL has been ringfenced and is being held in a separate bank account together with a small amount of interest (year-end CIL bank balance of £214,687 including £35,276 received in October 2019). There has been no expenditure out of this account to date.

The balance of other receipts includes recovered VAT of £2,430, bank interest received of £68, a parish mowing contribution from Northamptonshire County Council of £353 and £338 donated to the Parish Council on the closure of Boughton Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

### Reserves

The Reserves balance includes the £214,687 of CIL funds analysed above which has been received from Daventry District Council on a major housing development within Boughton parish. Reserves which have been retained out of past precept income total £44,900 which is 75% (9 months) of the 2020/2021 precept which is within the "twice income" restriction.

# Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Boughton Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	John Marshall	Date of report:	21.04.2021
Year ending:	31 March 2021	Date audit carried out:	21.04.2021

*Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. It is important to note that managing the council's internal controls is a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and councillors and it would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of the council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to and seen by me. **The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.***

## To the Chairman of the Council:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and as a consequence of the legal distancing restrictions imposed by the UK government I carried out the audit remotely, by e-mail and 'phone. I would thank Jayne Bunting, Clerk and RFO for her co-operation and assistance in delivering the audit; having the year-end data available so promptly at the end of what has been a very difficult year for clerks and councils, together with her quick response to my queries has been very helpful to me.

I firstly examined the publicly available information displayed on the council's website including the council's policies, procedures, agendas, minutes, financial and other records. I sought evidence that the previous year's Internal and External Audit reports had been properly reported to and where necessary acted upon by the Council; they had. The latter raised no audit issues and the issue raised by me relating to the Chairman's Allowance was noted but the Minutes are silent regarding any action. I then examined the council's arrangements for the management and control of its business in the areas of bookkeeping, due process (ie compliance with the proper practices as set out in the Practitioners' Guide), risk management, budget setting and monitoring, payroll, asset register, bank reconciliations, internal control and year-end procedures and compliance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities including the public display of information.

I looked particularly at the arrangements that the council put in place in response to the C-19 restrictions, to manage the processes and procedures that would normally require documents including Minutes, invoices etc to be physically examined and / or signed. Where changes have been made, I am satisfied that the modified arrangements have been introduced without any significant diminution in the overall standard of internal controls.

Where necessary, I requested and was provided with supplementary evidence to enable me to reach a conclusion regarding the enquiries I am required to make as set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) that forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). This supplementary information was provided in the form of written answers to the questions raised together with scanned documents including the Accounting Statements (section 2 of the AGAR) and the bank reconciliation.

I am pleased to be able to report that having tested all the aspects of the council's internal controls that I am required to consider, based on the information made available to me I am satisfied that in all significant respects, the internal control objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the council's needs. Accordingly, I have completed and signed off the Annual Internal Audit Report as required.

Finally, I note that Jayne Bunting is leaving the council's employment at the end of this month. My work as Internal Auditor has always been made all the easier by her efficiency, care and attention to detail that are exemplary. I wish her and the council well in the future.

John Marshall, CiLCA  
Internal Auditor to the Council  
07505 139832  
[wjm.marshall1@gmail.com](mailto:wjm.marshall1@gmail.com)

The figures submitted in the Annual Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2020	Year ending 31 March 2021
1. Balances brought forward	40,617	73,670
2. Annual precept	51,293	59,454
3. Total other receipts	40,263	182,892
4. Staff costs	16,287	17,543
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	42,216	38,886
7. Balances carried forward	73,670	259,587
8. Total cash and investments	73,670	259,587
9. Total fixed assets and long term assets	51,689	55,170
10. Total borrowings	0	0

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, A Practitioners' Guide*. Please note that sections 1 & 2 constitute the 'proper practices' that smaller authorities must follow and sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting. A copy of the current version of the Guide and other useful information is available for free download from this page:

<https://www.pkf-littlejohn.com/services-limited-assurance-regime-useful-documents-and-links>