

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Arnside Parish Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

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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 the 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.

The council has not answered box 9 on Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement with regards to Trust disclosure, as it has been provided elsewhere it is not a sole trustee, this should have been marked 'n/a'.

Section 2 Accounting Statements has not been correctly completed. Box 2 does not agree to the precept and includes other income that should have been included in Box 3, even though it may have been received from the same source at the same time. We would expect these figures to be restated on the next year's AGAR, and suitably identified as restated to bring it to the attention of the reader. From the precept information provided to us Box 2 should be £54,150 and Box 3 should therefore be restated accordingly. We would expect this to be reflected in the council's response to Assertion 1 on the 2023-24 return.

We identified during our review that box 9 of the 2021-22 column on Section 2 - Accounting Statements was restated, due to a change in valuation method. In reviewing the 2022-23 return we note that the column has not been marked as 'Restated' to bring it to the attention of the reader, which is a breach of proper practices and as a result a 'No' response should have been provided at assertion 3 on the 2022-23 Governance Statement. As the figures for the 2023 year are correctly stated we do not believe this should impact the 2023-24 return.

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

Section 2 of the AGAR was initially submitted without the Trust Fund disclosure in Box 11a and 11b completed. This was later resubmitted with 'No' answer for 11a which was correct and 'No' and 'N/A' answers for 11b but this was expected to be answered 'N/A', given the Council are not a sole trustee.

Incomplete information received with regards to significant variances. The parish council should in future ensure that significant variances are scheduled in their entirety and provided with the initial submission data for review. Explanations have been received and are acceptable, so we have no further concerns in this area.

The Council left a period of time between approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the commencement of the Public Rights Period. The Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015, section 12 (3)(a) and proper practices require that following approval of the Return, the Public Rights Period should commence as soon as is reasonably practicable when taking into consideration the mandatory inclusion of the first 10 working days of July.

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We 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 2023.

External Auditor Name

 **MOORE**

External Auditor Signature



Date

30/09/2023