

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

Wotton Parish Council – SU0089

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 2022; 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 (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 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.

The smaller authority was issued a public interest report (PIR) for non-submission of the AGAR for the 2020/21 year on 17/12/21. Where a PIR is issued, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) requires the authority to consider the PIR at a public meeting within one month of the date it was issued. Due to unfortunate circumstances this did not happen and the PIR was also not published on the smaller authority's website. As a result of this, the response to Section 1, Assertion 3 should have been "No".

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

In the prior year, the smaller authority did not submit an AGAR for our review and we issued a public interest report regarding this failure. As a result, we have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertions in Section 1, Boxes 2, 4, 5 and 7, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. The same matters were identified by the internal auditor in the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, where they have drawn attention to weaknesses in respect of internal controls, risk assessment, the fixed asset register and documentation on the website. The smaller authority has confirmed that it has already started to address the issues identified.

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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 2022.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

22/09/2022

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)