

## Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Studley 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

### 2 External auditor report 2022/23

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.

Section 14(1) of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 requires the period of public rights should be a 'single period of 30 working days'. The Council provided a period of 32 working days in 2022-23 for the review of their records which is a significant breach of the regulation and the Council need to note this for completion of the governance assertions on the 2024 form. In future the council should ensure that it calculates and provides a period of precisely 30 working days.

The council has answered 'Yes' to box 11a and 11b with regards to Trust disclosures. However, this appear inconsistent with other information provided in respect of their sole trustee responsibilities. We therefore believe these boxes should have been answered 'No'. We note the council is looking at what can be done to address this issue.

Responses provided on Section 1 of the AGAR appear inconsistent with the Internal Auditors Report. Box 2 and Box 5 were answered 'Yes' however given the information in the Internal Auditors Report we would have expected these to have been answered 'No' as governance issues in these areas were identified during the Internal Audit process.

Section 12 of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 requires the RFO to complete Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return prior to passing it to the Council for its approval. This year, the Council approved the Return before the RFO which is a breach of this regulation. In future the Council should ensure the form is duly completed prior to it considering it for approval.

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

On initial submission of the AGAR, Section 1 and 2 did not include the signatures, dates and minute references. This was queried and resubmitted with the information completed.

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.

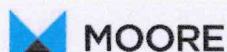
The original Section 2 Accounting Statements form included an incorrect number at Box 1. The appropriate adjustments have been made on the face of the AGAR and we have no further concerns in this respect.

The initial bank reconciliation provided contained an error, the corrected bank reconciliation was later provided on request. We have no further issues in this respect.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

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



External Auditor Signature

*Moore*

Date

24/09/2023