

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Harrietsham Parish Council

www.harrietshamparishcouncil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, 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 2023/24 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.		n/A	Applicable
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 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

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

23/10/2023

12/04/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

S J Pollard for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date

12/04/2024

*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 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

HARRIETSHAM 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 2024, 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:

24/04/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

240424 / 713

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

Chair

C. Powell

Clerk

B. Broadhurst

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

HARRIETSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	271 041	257 986	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	132 197	131 481	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	36 582	43 547	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	71 324	82 336	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	—	—	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	110 510	114 252	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	257 986	236 426	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	246 439	224 282	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	689 969	688 911	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	—	—	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 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



Date

22/04/2024

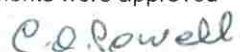
I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

24/04/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

240424/712

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



Harrietsham Parish Council**Reconciliation Between Box 7 and Box 8
in Section 2 (31/03/2024)**

	£	£
Total of Box 7: Balances carried forward (31/3/2024)		236,426
Deduct debtors:		
Loan repayments - capital (< 1 year)	662	
Loan repayments - interest (< 1 year)	3,146	
VAT Recovery	11,836	
Payments in advance	0	15,644
Add creditors:		
Creditors		
Village Hall Trust - Ground rent	3,500	
Receipts in Advance	0	3,500
	Calculated Total	224,282
Total shown in Box 8 :		224,282
	Discrepancy::	0

Harrietsham Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation

Financial Year ending 31st March 2024

Prepared by Mr Michael Cuerden, Responsible Finance Officer

4th April 2024

Balance per bank statements, as at 31st March 2024	£		£
Natwest Current Account			2,500.00
Natwest Business Reserve			52,661.57
Cambridge Building Society			80,000.00
Nationwide Business Saver			89,120.32
		224,281.89	
No petty cash		0.00	
No unpresented cheques		0.00	
No unbanked cash		0.00	
Net Balance as at 31st March 2024		224,281.89	
Cashbook:			
Opening Balance, 1st April 2023			246,438.56
Add - receipts in the year			193,614.57
Less - payments in the year			215,771.24
Closing balance as at 31st March 2024		224,281.89	
		Discrepancy ::	0.00

HARRIETSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

2023/24 Audit

Additional information requested for an Intermediate Audit

Assertion 2:

The Council has quarterly Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) committee meetings, at which the general format includes a review of all income and expenditure to date, and the Chairman checks the physical bank statements against the reported totals of the monthly bank reconciliation. The Minutes of these meetings are then considered by that month's full Council, and approved.

All can be found on our website, www.harrietshamparishcouncil.gov.uk, under Minutes, and then either Finance or Full Council.

The April Minutes usually consider the Internal Audit report as well – with 2023/24 showing no recommendations for improvement, (copy attached, for your information and completeness), which is in line with previous years.

Assertion 3:

Financial Regulations were reviewed and re-adopted in November 2023, as minuted at that month's F&GP meeting.

Standing orders were reviewed and re-adopted in November as well, as minuted at that month's full Council meeting.

Again, the internal audit had a comment on this topic, accepting that all is well.

Assertion 6:

The assertion reads "We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems."

As can be seen from the response to assertion 2, we hold quarterly detailed reviews of income, expenditure and the bank balances. This is in addition to the monthly Council meetings, where the transactions are presented to all councillors, together with the bank balances, plus cumulative figures against budget.

All this is in addition to the Internal Auditor's work, who attests to the effectiveness and thoroughness of these measures. His audit is attached, should you wish to review it.

So far as the audit company itself is concerned, the council has used it for a number of years on a rolling contract. The current year might see a change, as the methodology to be used is likely to change, so we shall be seeking clarification on the implications, and then deciding whether to continue with the same company, or to switch to another. This will be a decision for F&GP, endorsed by Council.