

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Bampton 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 have exceeded the thresholds for the receipts and payments basis of accounts for three consecutive years therefore the income and expenditure (accruals) basis is required, with the comparative year amended to be on the same basis. As Section 2 has been prepared on a receipts and payments basis assertion 1 should have been answered 'No'.

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

The Chair has confirmed that the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were reviewed as part of a procedure to update them for an incoming protocol change. This review was not formally reported to a council meeting for adoption of the new regulations, and therefore not minuted, as the action requiring the change did not occur in the period under inspection. It is anticipated the adoption of the new regulations will occur during the 2023-24 period. At this time we would anticipate the council putting in place a diarised system for regular reviews to ensure these are undertaken as is required by Proper Practices.

The internal auditor has provided a 'yes' response at control check J on their report. However, the accounts have been prepared on the incorrect basis. The council need to prepare their accounts on an Income & Expenditure (accruals) basis and have used the receipts and payments basis.

The internal auditor has provided a 'yes' response at control check K on their report. This suggests that the council correctly claimed exemption from audit in the previous (2021-22) year. As the council was not exempt and did not claim exemption the answer to this point should have been 'not covered' with that statement given by way of explanation

Incomplete information was provided with the initial supporting data submitted for review with regards to significant variances, which was later provided on request. The parish council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

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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

10/09/2023