

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

Wickwar Parish Council – AV0129

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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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.

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

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to payroll calculations. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 9 in respect of trust funds. Section 2, Box 11 has been left blank. The smaller authority has confirmed that it is sole managing trustee of a trust fund and that the answer to Section 2, Box 11 should have been 'Yes'. The smaller authority has also confirmed that the transactions and assets of the trust fund are included in the figures in the AGAR which is contrary to Proper Practices. The smaller authority has taken legal advice that it is not required to have a separate bank account for the trust fund however in order to be able to exclude the trust fund figures from the AGAR in accordance with paragraphs 1.41 and 2.30 of the Practitioners' Guide, the smaller authority should consider operating a separate bank account for this purpose.

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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

29/09/2022

* 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)