

NOT EXEMPT PARISH MEETINGS ONLY

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3PM

ONLY to be completed on behalf of PARISH MEETINGS OF PARISHES NOT HAVING PARISH COUNCILS:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes for Parish Meetings on completing Form 3PM of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every Parish Meeting in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3PM of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the Parish Meeting's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the Parish Meeting.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the Parish Meeting.
3. The Parish Meeting **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published **before 1 July 2023**.
4. A Parish Meeting with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or a Parish Meeting with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the review and is able to give an opinion on the limited assurance review, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the Chairman of the Parish Meeting by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, a Parish Meeting must publish on a suitable website or be publicly displayed in the local area for a period of 14 days, the following information:

Before 1 July 2023:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 & 2 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion for local electors and interested parties, that you also publish or display the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Guidance notes for Parish Meetings on completing **Form 3PM** of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The Parish Meeting **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs may be incurred.
- The Parish Meeting **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the accounts (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Chairman must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The Chairman is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Chairman, and provide a relevant email address and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the Parish Meeting holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support your explanation.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not fully explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Meeting, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which must include the first ten working days of July.
- The Parish Meeting **must** publish on a suitable website or publicly display in the local area the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Parish Meeting's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL

www.wigontown.com

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, 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 2022/23 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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

14/03/23 22/06/2023. GEORGINA D. AIREY.

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

G Airey

Date

22/06/2023.

*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).

Form 3PM Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

WIGTON TOWN 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 2023, that:

	Agreed		Yes' means that this Parish Meeting
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	YES		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	YES		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
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.	YES		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
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.	YES		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this Parish Meeting and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	YES		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	YES		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls met the needs of this Parish Meeting.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	YES		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
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 Parish Meeting and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	YES		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the Parish Meeting will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published or displayed with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a Parish Meeting on:

29/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

FC/43/2023

Signed by the Chairman of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Place where the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements are published or displayed (e.g. Parish Notice Board, Newsletter, Village website, etc.).

www.wigontown.com DISPLAYED

Section 2

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	374637.16	107983.77	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	300000.00	350000.00	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received
3. (+) Total other receipts	278548.70	178414.58	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	201240.16	221087.62	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		8083.72	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any)
6. (-) All other payments	643961.93	235295.51	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	107983.77	171931.50	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	94668.56	161845.85	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	773893.00	1791646.41	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	158222.11	152852.51	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)			N/A	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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

E. Iw

Date

29/06/2023

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

29/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

FC 144 / 2023

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

Ce

Form 3PM Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF PARISH MEETING

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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's limited assurance opinion 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 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. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify/do not 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.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY