

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

PENKETH 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' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.		✓	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.		✓	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.		✓	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.		✓	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 authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.		✓	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.		✓	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.	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.		✓	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 authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.		✓	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.	
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	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
		✓		

\*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:

10.6.2024

and recorded as minute reference:

AGAR-2024

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

Chair

Clerk

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**Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for**

**PENKETH PARISH COUNCIL**

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	117,374	152,191	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	211,948	212,408	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	43,085	162,481	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	11,582	89,838	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	208,635	216,421	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	152,190	220,821	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	130,080	169,341	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,173,865	1,173,865*	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	0	0	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**

*Val*  
 Date 5.6.24

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

10.6.2024

as recorded in minute reference:

AGAR - 2024

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

*G. N. Hill*

\* TO BE RE-STATED WHEN ASSET REGISTER HAS BEEN UPDATED.

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

**Penketh Parish Council – CH0156**

### 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 2024; 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 2023/24

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.

Please see below

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

The smaller authority has submitted its AGAR and supporting documentation prior to 30 September 2024; however, we have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable to smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements. Once we have completed our review a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and ‘other’ matters.

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

We do not certify completion because:

We have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable to smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements.

External Auditor Name

**PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature



Date

29/09/2024

## Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24 in respect of Penketh Parish Council – CH0156

### 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 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On 29 September 2024, we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review.

The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

Except for the matters reported below, 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.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR.:

- Section 2, Box 9 for the current year is incorrect and should read £1,188,788.

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

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertions in Section 1, Boxes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and it has provided the appointed auditor with an explanation for non-compliance in relation to a general lack of internal control over the budget process and payments. The smaller authority has provided details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

The smaller authority has not provided:

- an adequate explanation for the variance between the prior and current year values in Box 3 and 4 of Section 2.
- an adequate explanation for the difference between Boxes 7 and 8 of Section 2.

It was not clear whether the classification of expenses for Boxes 4 and 6 for the current and prior year has been correctly carried out. Please restate Boxes 4 and 6 in next year's prior year comparatives if appropriate.

The Practitioners Guide states that Financial Regulations need to be 'regularly reviewed', however as was noted previously, the Financial Regulations have not been updated since July 2021, therefore the smaller authority should consider this when responding to Assertion 2 of the 2024/25 AGAR.

It was noted that not all bank accounts are in the name of the parish council, and this was also raised in the prior year external auditor report.

The smaller authority has not arranged for an independent internal auditor to review the internal controls and give their conclusion in the Annual Internal Audit Report. If no internal audit work is carried out before 31 March 2025, it must disclose this by answering 'No' to Assertion 6 of the Annual Governance Statement on the 2024/25 AGAR. In future years, the smaller authority must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

### **External auditor certificate 2023/24**

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*PKF Littlejohn LLP*

**PKF Littlejohn LLP**

**22/10/2024**