## Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- 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 on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

- 1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 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 authority's internal auditor.
  - · Sections 1 and 2 must be completed and approved by the authority.
  - Section 3 is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
- 3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024.**
- 4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority 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 2024. Reminder letters will 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 2024
  - · an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - · notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

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 limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate will be returned to the authority by email or post.

#### **Publication Requirements**

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities must publish:

 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 2023/24, approved and signed, page 4

• Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities must publish:

Notice of conclusion of audit

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate

• Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested

parties, that you also publish 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.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3 Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\* Page 1 of 6

# Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **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. Any
  amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority 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 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) 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 RFO 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 Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses 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 authority 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 the full variance.
- 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 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **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 authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage 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 2024**.

Completion checkl	ist – '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 Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
e	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB</b> : do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

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

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3 Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*

## Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

LUTTE PARISH CONCL

# http. Lutton. parish. lincohshire. 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>B.</b> This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	V		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	V		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	$\checkmark$		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	$\checkmark$		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			NA
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.	v		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	V		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	V		
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.	V		
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.	V		
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 ( <i>during the 2023-24 AGAR period</i> , 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).	$\checkmark$		
	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	100		V
For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on s Date(s) internal audit undertaken $1412024$ Name of person who carried	out the		
DOMMAYAY DOMMAYAY DOMMAYAY BEBOORN		1141	
Signature of person who		11	×

carried out the internal audit

\*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).

Date

2024

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

## LUTTON 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:

	Agr	eed	
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
<ol> <li>We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.</li> </ol>	~		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
<ol><li>We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.</li></ol>	/	1	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.	V		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.	V		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
<ol> <li>We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.</li> </ol>	~		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.
<ol><li>We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.</li></ol>	V		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.

Chair

Clerk

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

13/05/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

62-24 NOE

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

Dialkusi Chlatheus URED

http:// witton. parish. Lincolnshire.gov.uk

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

Section 2 – Account	ing Statements	2023/24 for
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	Year	ending	Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
1. Balances brought forward	42,674	37,311	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	23 000	23 000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	27, 311	64,479	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	8,205	8, 884	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	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	47, 469	86,323	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash- book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	37, 311	29,583	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	37. 311	29,583	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	42, 278	66,667	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	NIL	NIL	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

## LUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	$\checkmark$			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)			V	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

Chatheus 13/05/2024

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

as recorded in minute reference:

63-24

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

isc

Date

Bank reconciliation – pro f	orma							
This reconciliation should include all ban								
Box 8 in the column headed "Year ending								
are prepared on a receipts and payments	s basis. Please	complete 1	the highlight	ed boxes, r	emembering	that unprese	nted chequ	es should
be entered as negative figures.								
Name of smaller authority:	Lutton Paris	h Council	1					
County area (local councils and paris	h mootings a	n hu).	Lincolnshi	ro				
County area (local councils and paris	in meetings c	////y).						
Financial year ending 31 March 20	24							
Prepared by (Name and Role):	C Matthews	, Clerk & F	RFO					
-								
Date:	01/04/2024							
					£	£		
Balance per bank statements as a	t 31/3/24·				2	L		
Balance per Sank statements as a	Unity Trust	Current Ac	count		29,583.0			
					,			
[add more accounts if necessary]								
						29,583.0		
						20,000.0		
Petty cash float (if applicable)						-		
Less: any unpresented cheques as a	t 31/3/24 <b>(en</b>	ter these	as negati	ve numbe				
					0.00			
[add more lines if necessary]								
Add: any up hanked each as at 21/2/	04					-		
Add: any un-banked cash as at 31/3/	<u> </u>				_			
						-		
Net balances as at 31/3/24 (Box 8)						29,583.0		

Explanation of var	iances – pro forma							
lame of smaller authority:	Lutton Parish Council							
ounty area (local councils and	Lincolnshire							
nsert figures from Section	n 2 of the AGAR in all <u>Blue</u> highli	ighted boxes						
ext please provide full e	xplanations, including numerica	l values for the	a following th	nat will be fl	aged in			
e green boxes where rel		i values, ior the	e tollowing ti		aggeu in			
	% between totals for individual box	es (except varia	nces of less t	han £200);				
	ds: variances of £100,000 or more	e require explan	ation regardle	ess of the %	variation			
rear on year;								
							Automatic responses trigger below based on	
						Explanation	figures input, <b>DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE</b>	
		2022/23	2023/24	Variance	Variance	Required?		Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
		£	£	£	%	•		
Delesses Develop							Explanation of % variance from PY opening	
Balances Brought Forwa	ard	40 674	27 244				balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
		42,674	37,311				loiwaid agrees	
Precept or Rates and Le	evies	23,000	23,000	0	0.00%	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts								4 funding grants received for park equipment totalling 34,999. 64,479 - 34,999 = 29,480 =
		27,311	64,479	37,168	136.09%	YES		variance 7.94%
					0.000/			
Staff Costs		8,205	8,884	679	8.28%	NO		
5 Loan Interest/Capital Re	enavment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
2001 Interest oupling rice	spayment	<u> </u>	Ū		0.0070	110		
								38,100 spent on new park equipment with funding raised. 86,323 - 38,100 = 48,223 = variance
3 All Other Payments		47,469	86,323	38,854	81.85%	YES		1.59%
Balances Carried Forwa	ard	37,311	29,583				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
3 Total Cash and Short T		37,311	29,583				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
o rotal Cash and Short T	erminvestments	37,311	29,583				VARIANCE EAFLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
								Additional new park equipment was installed, totalling 23,177 and a new bench 1212 = 24389.
Total Fixed Assets plus	Other Long Term Investments a	an 42,278	66,667	24,389	57.69%	YES		66,667 - 24,389 = 42,278 = variance 0%
0 Total Borrowings		0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
		de la sechia						
Ro	ounding errors of up to £2 are	tolerable						
Va	riances of £200 or less are to	lerable						

## Lutton Parish Council

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

#### ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

## Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE

1. Date of announcement: Friday 31st May 2024

2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2023, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

Claire Matthews Clerk & RFO Lutton Parish Council 20 Claudette Way, Spalding, PE11 1AJ luttonclerk@gmail.com

commencing on Monday 3rd June 2024

and ending on Friday 12th July 2024

#### 3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:

PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team) 15 Westferry Circus Canary Wharf London E14 4HD (sba@pkf-l.com)

5. This announcement is made by Claire Matthews, Clerk & RFO

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

## Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including parish meetings where there is no parish council.

#### The basic position

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

#### The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2021 for 2020/21 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

#### The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the

period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

#### The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

#### A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

## Lutton Parish Council

### Notice of conclusion of audit

### Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

			Notes
1.	The audit of accounts for L March 2024 has been comp published.	This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for, the AGAR and external audior report must be publicly available for 5 years.	
2.	certificate and opinion is av	Accountability Return including the auditor's allable for inspection and copying by any the area of Lutton Parish Council on	
(a)	Claire Matthews - Cle	erk & RFO	(a) Insert the name, position and
	20 Claudettle Way	. Spalding, PE11 !AJ	address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR
(b)	Monday to Friday,	(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised	
3.	Copies will be provided to a payment of £ (c) for ea Accountability Return.	<ul> <li>(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs</li> </ul>	
Anno	uncement made by: (d)	Claire Matthews	(d) Insert the name and position of
		28th August 2024	person placing the notice
Date	of announcement: (e)		(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice
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