



MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

**Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to be held at St Paul's Parish Hall,
Scotforth on Wednesday, 1st May 2024, commencing at 7.00pm**

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies.** To receive apologies
2. **Minutes.** To consider and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd April 2024 and receive updates on any matters arising.
3. **Chairman's Annual Report 2023/24.** To receive the Chairman's Report for 2023/24.
4. **Election of Officials 2024/25.**
 - a) To elect the Chair of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2024/25
 - b) To elect the Deputy Chair of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2024/25.
 - c) To sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair.
5. **Declarations of Interest.** To receive any changes to Declarations of Interest of Parish Councillors
6. **Councillors' Roles.** To review and assign roles for the municipal year 2024/25, including:
 - a) Highways
 - b) Amenity, including Lengthsman liaison
 - c) Stakeholder liaison, including United Utilities
 - d) Neighbourhood Development Plan
 - e) Ancillary/projects
 - f) Broadband provision
7. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and Final Accounts 2023/24.** To consider the draft AGAR and final accounts for 2023/24. (Clerk's report attached)
8. **Risk Register Review 2024/25.** To consider the conclusions and recommendations from a review of the Council's risk register (Clerk's report attached).
9. **Review of Council Policies and Procedures.** To consider the conclusions and recommendations from a review of the following (Clerk's report attached).
 - a) Information Management and Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice, and Publication Scheme; and
 - b) Complaints Procedure.

10. Planning Applications.

- a) To consider and comment on planning matters, including new planning applications and an update on decisions (report attached). New applications received since the last meeting are set out below:

Application No	Description
24/00464/FUL	Installation of roof lights to front elevation. Barn 5, Waterside Farm, Stodday Lane. Deadline: 14 th May 2024

- b) To consider any other planning matters affecting the Parish.

11. Lancaster University Wind Turbine Community Benefits Fund. To consider the advertised opportunity to bid for funding.

12. Public Discussion and Updates. To adjourn the meeting for a period of public discussion and to provide any 'information only' updates on activities in recent weeks. (Note: Any matters needing a 'decision' will normally be considered as an agenda item at a future meeting).

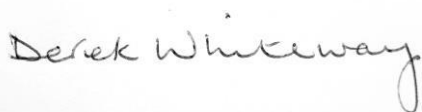
- a) Clerk's report on activities and correspondence since last meeting
- b) Members' updates and reports since the last meeting, including:

Highways	Amenity, incl Lengthsman	Stakeholder, incl United Utilities
Ancillary	Broadband provision	

- c) Report of District and County Councillors
- d) Public discussion

13. Payments. To authorise payment of accounts. Report attached.

14. Date of Next Meeting. To confirm the venue, date and time for the next meeting.



Derek Whiteway

Parish Clerk

Tel: 01524 64908

Email: clerk@aldcliffewithstoddaypc.org

25th April 2024



Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 3rd^h April 2024 at 7.00pm at St Paul's Parish Hall, Scotforth

Present: Councillor Nick Webster (Chairman)
Councillors Tim Dant and Denise Parrett
Derek Whiteway, Parish Clerk

24/001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heather Ward and Kevan Walton, City Councillors Abi Mills and Tim Hamilton-Cox and County Councillor Gina Dowding.

24/002 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 1) The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th March 2024 were approved without further amendment.

Matters arising:

2) 23/098(2) Review of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Letters are to be sent to residents in 6 properties shown on the City Council's online NDHA map but not identified in the Parish NDP. A letter is also to be sent to Lancaster City Council questioning the approach to identifying and listing further NDHAs.

Action: The Clerk and Councillor Parrett will liaise in sending the relevant letters.

3) 23/098(3) Oaklands and Craiglunds Court Pedestrian Gates and Cattle Grid.

The Clerk is to write to Lancashire County Council thanking them for the new cattle grid at Craiglunds Court and asking for the damaged pedestrian gate to be repaired. The Chairman is to provide photos of the damaged gate,

Action: The Chairman and Clerk will liaise to report the damaged pedestrian gate.

4) 23/098(4) United Utilities Sewage Discharge Statistics.

Councillor Ward had advised that she was planning to contact United Utilities management about arranging a site visit and an opportunity to discuss various matters, including discharge statistics.

Action: The Clerk will liaise with Councillor Ward in seeking a meeting and site visit with United Utilities management.

5) 23/098(5) Stodday Lane and Lunecliffe Road hedgerows.

No further progress to report.

6) 23/098(6) Fallen Road Sign on Aldcliffe Lane.

The fallen road sign had been reported to County Highways and an inspection and response was awaited.

7) 23/098(7) Parish Council Website and Email Addresses

The Clerk reported on changes made in the most recent Practitioners Guide (for the 2024/25 Accounts). This included an increase in further 'encouragement' to Parish Councils to adopt *.gov domains. Some limited funding was potentially available. Need to express an interest to obtain details.

Action: The Clerk will investigate further and report to the next meeting of the Council.

8) 23/105(2) Request sent to LCC re Street Cleaning schedules in the Parish

The Chairman reported that Street Cleaners had visited Aldcliffe earlier that day.

9) 23/105(3) 80th Anniversary of D-Day – Lighting of the Beacons.

Councillors decided that, given the lack of a suitable location and limited funds, no further action would be taken.

10) 23/0105(4) GIS for Digital Mapping

Nothing further to report.

24/003 Declarations of Interest

No further declarations or changes to existing declarations were made.

24/004 Public discussion.

No members of the public attended the meeting.

24/005 Planning Applications

1) Planning Consultations

Application No	Description
24/00325/FUL	<p>Demolition of existing porch, erection of rear and side extension, construction of raised decking at rear, installation of steps to new entrance to replace existing and replace existing front door with window. Arna Wood Farm West, Arna Wood Lane, Aldcliffe.</p> <p>Resolved: That a response be submitted, expressing no objection in principle, but asking that the Parish's Design Codes be applied.</p>

2) Update on Previous Planning Applications

The Clerk's report on recent planning decisions made by Lancaster City Council was accepted.

3) Public Hearing – Application 23/00049/REF (Appeal)

An appeal hearing against refusal of application 22/00885/OUT (for up to 70 dwellings, Land North of Ashford House, Ashton Rd, Lancaster) is being held on 16-17 April 2024. Councillor Dant has registered to speak at the hearing.

24/006 Long Mile Lane and Lune Estuary.

Councillor Dant reported on recent discussions with farmers and the Morecambe Bay Wildfowlers Association (MBWA) regarding Long Mile Lane flooding. Recent work had resulted in the culvert being functional and the lane clear and draining of flood water. It was agreed that the Council should not take any further action at this stage.

24/007 Lengthsman Services 2024/25

The Clerk provided an update on information provided by Morecambe Town Council and Lancashire Highways regarding their weed spraying contract and work schedules. The Chairman reported that weed spraying commissioned separately by the Parish Council in Aldcliffe in 2023 had worked well.

Following discussion, Councillors resolved that the Parish Council should commission weed spraying work to the same schedule as in 2023, with the addition of: a) roads in Stodday where there is a 'hard edge; and b) pavements on Ashton Road between Deep Cutting Bridge to the bus stop opposite the entrance to Pinewood Close.

Resolved: That the Parish Council should commission weed spraying work in the parish from the contractor used in 2023.

24/008 Clerk and Councillor Updates

City and County Councillors' Reports:

None submitted.

Clerk's Report:

1) Civility and Respect Project and the Civility and Respect Pledge.

Councillors decided not to take any action regarding the project and pledge.

2) Draft Closure of Accounts

The Clerk provided Councillors with some headline messages from the draft closure of the 2023/24 accounts. These included:

- Net receipts in 2023/24 of £2,700
- A closing General Account balance of £9,000.

The draft final accounts will be reported in full to the May meeting of the Council alongside the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Members' Updates

3) Highways (Chairman)

Councillors discussed the ongoing and unresolved road surface and flooding issues on Lunecliffe Road and blocked canal side gulleys on Aldcliffe Road.

Councillors agreed that:

- a) ongoing safety concerns and the lack of action should be reported to the County Councillor;
- b) residents should be encouraged to report highways issues using the County Council's 'Love Clean Streets' app; and
- c) the County Council's promise to reinstate white lining at the junction of Lunecliffe Road and Aldcliffe Lane should be followed up.

Action: The Clerk will report the Council's ongoing concerns to County Councillor Dowding and seek further action.

Action: The Council will encourage residents to make use of the County Council's 'Love Clean Streets' app to report highways issues.

Action: The Clerk will check up on the Council's request for white lining to be reinstated at the Lunecliffe Road / Aldcliffe Lane junction.

4) Amenity, including the Lengthsman (Chairman)

Nothing to report.

5) Stakeholder Liaison.

Nothing further to report.

6) Broadband.

The Chairman advised that the phone mast at Watery Lane had now been fixed but that signal strength did not appear to be improved.

7) Other Matters

None

24/009 Payments

Payee & Detail	£
Scotforth Parish Hall. Hire of Meeting Room for Parish Council meeting, 3 rd April 2024 (see note 1)	25.20
Derek Whiteway – Parish Clerk salary and expenses, March 2024	215.85
HMRC – PAYE deductions, March 2024	54.00

Note 1. Invoices from St Paul's Parish Hall are now received at the end of each calendar month and payments are processed separately.

Resolved: That the above accounts be approved for payment.

24/010 Date and venue for next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 1st May 2024 at St Paul's Parish Hall, Scotforth, commencing at 7.00pm. Councillor Parrett gave her advance apologies.

The meeting closed at 8:55pm

Clerk of the Council

Chair

Date:

Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council

Meeting Date: 1st May 2024

Agenda Item:

7

Report of: The Parish Clerk

2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and Final Accounts

1. Introduction

Smaller local councils are statutorily required to complete an annual review of their governance arrangements and submit and publish an annual statement, including the approved accounts, known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The deadline for submission of the AGAR to the Council's appointed external auditor (PKF Littlejohn) is 30th June 2024. The draft AGAR is appended to this report.

2. Reporting Responsibilities

As a smaller authority (i.e. having a turnover not exceeding £25k) the Parish Council is again able to claim exemption from the 'limited assurance' external audit process. The Council is required to resolve to claim exemption and submit a duly completed and signed Exemption Certificate.

The approved AGAR, including the Accounting Statement and certain supporting documents, must be published following approval, providing a public right of inspection period of 30 working days, including the first 10 working days of July 2024. The proposed timetable for the Council to meet the reporting requirements and statutory deadlines is as follows.

a)	Completion of the annual review, internal audit and approval of the accounts.	01/05/24 (Annual PC Meeting)
b)	Public rights of inspection period	03/06/24 to 12/07/24 (inclusive)

3. Internal Auditor's Report 2023/24

The draft AGAR contains the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24 and it is pleasing to note that the Internal Auditor has once again given a positive response to each of the internal control objectives set out in the statement. The Internal Auditor has not raised any additional matters or made any recommendations for consideration by the Parish Council.

4. Final Accounts 2023/24

The addendum includes a more detailed report of the Council's 2023/24 final budget outturn and a statement of reserves at 31st March 2024. Members will note that the General Account balance at 31st March 2024 stood at £9,305. This compares with the Council's established target reserves of £4,000, indicating that up to £5,305 of funds can be available for purposes over and above 'normal business'.

It is recommended that these funds (up to a maximum of £5,305) are deployed as follows:

- a) Closing the Stodday Picnic Site Project account by charging the £166 net spending to the General Account.
- b) Making a contribution of £120 to the Elections Reserve to bring it back up to the target level of £1,000; and
- c) Making further contributions to the other established earmarked reserves (Environmental Support Reserve and NDP Review Reserve) and/or any new reserve(s) which might be appropriate at this time.

For context, the external audit guideline on reserves is to require explanations where a Council's total balances exceed two times the annual precept. As set out in the final accounts statement, the Council's reserves at 31st March 2024 totalled £13,288 as against the precept of £5,800.

5. Banking Considerations

At 22nd April 2024, following receipt of the 2024/25 precept and reclaimed VAT, the Parish Council's bank balances totalled 19,427, being £7,632 in the Current Account and £11,795 in the Instant Access Account. The Instant Access Account currently attracts interest at 2.75%p.a. With General Account spending for 2024/25 budgeted to be £6,905, the account balances appear appropriate under current circumstances.

6. Recommendations

- (1) That the Internal Auditor's report is accepted and noted.**
- (2) That Section 1 of the AGAR – the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, is approved.**
- (3) That Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2023/24, is approved.**
- (4) That the Council claims exemption from the limited assurance audit and submits the required Exemption Certificate.**
- (5) That the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts is set as Monday 3rd June to Friday 12th July 2024 inclusive.**
- (6) That funds in the General Account balance are used to:**
 - a) Close the Stodday Picnic Site Project account (a charge of £166);**
 - b) Make a contribution of £120 to the Elections Reserve; and**
 - c) Make further contributions to the other established earmarked reserves (Environmental Support Reserve and NDP Review Reserve) and/or any new reserve(s) appropriate at this time.**

Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council			
Final Accounts 2023/24 - General Account			
Heading	Budget	Actuals	Variance
	£	£	£
Balance Bfwd	7,580	7,345	- 235
Receipts			
Precept	5,800	5,800	-
Other Receipts			
Local Delivery Scheme	800	-	- 800
Bank Interest	-	285	285
VAT Refund	9	821	812
Total Receipts	6,609	6,905	296
Payments			
Staff Costs			
Parish Clerk Salary	- 2,240	- 2,248	- 8
PAYE	- 560	- 562	- 2
Other Payments			
Parish Clerk Expenses	- 15	- 13	2
Parish Clerk Training	- 40	-	40
Councillors Expenses	- 50	-	50
Meeting Room Hire	- 275	- 283	- 8
Subscriptions	- 60	- 47	13
Lengthsman Services	- 3,250	- 303	2,947
Insurance	- 265	- 241	24
Printing & Stationery	- 65	- 19	46
IT Services	- 175	-	175
Data Protection Registration	- 35	- 35	-
Internal Audit	- 70	- 68	2
Bank Charges	- 80	- 72	8
Recoverable VAT	-	- 304	304
Total Payments	- 7,180	- 4,195	2,985
Net Receipts/Payments	- 571	2,711	3,282
Transfer to NDP Review Reserve	-	- 750	750
Balance Cfwd	7,009	9,305	2,296

Final Accounts 2023/24 - General and Earmarked Reserves						
Heading	General Account	Environmental Support Reserve	Elections Reserve	Stodday Picnic Site Project	NDP Review Reserve	Totals
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance Bfwd 01/04/23	7,345	2,519	1,000	1,585	-	12,449
Total Receipts	6,905	-	-	-	-	6,905
Picnic Site Furniture	-	-	-	1,751	-	1,751
Election Expenses	-	-	120	-	-	120
Transfer from General A/C	- 750	-	-	-	750	-
Total Payments	- 4,945	-	120	1,751	750	6,066
Balance Cfwd 31/03/24	9,305	2,519	880	166	750	13,288

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 2

To be completed only by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other smaller authorities* where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, that meet the qualifying criteria, and that wish to CERTIFY themselves as EXEMPT from a limited assurance review

Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income **or** gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, after the end of each financial year, complete Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices*, unless the authority:
 - a) does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
 - b) does not wish to certify itself as exempt
2. Smaller authorities where the higher of all gross annual income **or** gross annual expenditure **does not exceed** £25,000 and that meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption **are able to declare themselves exempt** from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review **provided** the authority **completes**:
 - a) The **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3 and returns a copy of it to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Failure to do so will result in reminder letter(s) for which the Authority will be charged £40 +VAT for each letter; and
 - b) The **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 2)** which is made up of:
 - c) **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - d) **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - e) **Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6)** must be completed and approved by the authority.**NOTE: Authorities certifying themselves as exempt SHOULD NOT send the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor.**
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**.

Publication Requirements

Smaller authorities **must** publish various documents on a publicly available website as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. These include:

- **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3
- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24**, page 4
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, page 5
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24**, page 6
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Limited Assurance Review

Any smaller authority may request a limited assurance review. If so, the authority should not certify itself as exempt or complete the Certificate of Exemption. Instead it should complete Form 3 of the AGAR 2023/24 and return it to the external auditor together with the supporting documentation requested by the external auditor. The cost to the authority for the review will be **£210 +VAT**.

Provided that the authority certifies itself as exempt, and completes and publishes the documents listed under 'Publication Requirements', there is no requirement for the authority to have a review.

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.

Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24, Sections 1 and 2

- An authority that wishes to declare itself exempt from the requirement for a limited assurance review must do so at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2024. It should not submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor. However, as part of a more proportionate regime, the authority **must** comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The Certificate of Exemption must be returned to the external auditor no later than **30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT for each letter.
- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. 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.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- 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.
- 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.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness at the meeting at which it is signed off.
- **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.**
- The authority must publish numerical and narrative explanations for significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 6**. Guidance is provided in the *Practitioners' Guide** which may assist.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and 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 checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?		
	Have the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights been published?		
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', is an explanation available for publication?		
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?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Is an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 available, should a question be raised by a local elector and/or an interested party?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? (<i>Local Councils only</i>)		

* *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

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2023/24 Form 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2024, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2024 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2024** notifying the external auditor.

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

certifies that during the financial year 2023/24, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year **or** total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Total annual gross income for the authority 2023/24:

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2023/24:

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt**, so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority **is unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£210 +VAT** will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2020
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2022/23), the external auditor **has not**:
 - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
 - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
 - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
 - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
 - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If the above statements apply and the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage* before 1 July 2024.

Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by Chair

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Generic email address of Authority

ENTER AUTHORITY OWNED GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS

Telephone number

TELEPHONE NUMBER

*Published web address

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2024. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 + VAT.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

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. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.			
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
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.			
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.			
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.			
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. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			
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.			
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, 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)</i> .			
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .			

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			

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

DD/MM/YYYY

DD/MM/YYYY

DD/MM/YYYY

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

*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).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

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.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
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.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
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.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
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.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>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.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
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.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
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
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)

The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.	Yes	No

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
			<i>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.</i>
1. Balances brought forward			<i>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.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts			<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs			<i>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.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments			<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments			<i>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.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			<i>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.</i>
10. Total borrowings			<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council

Meeting Date: 1st May 2024

Agenda Item:

8

Report of: The Parish Clerk

Review of the Risk Register

1. Introduction

Smaller local councils are statutorily required to complete an annual review of their risk management arrangements, normally at the annual meeting. The current register was approved by Council on 10th May 2023.

2. Detail

A review has been completed of the Risk Register, with the proposed update attached, showing substantive changes highlighted in yellow. Existing risks have been updated with any additional mitigations adopted since the last review, and one new 'Strategic and Operational' risk has been added.

The key proposed changes are:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| R7 downgraded | Potential adverse impacts on the Parish from proposed development of the 'Bailrigg Garden Village' and Lancaster South Area Action Plan (LSAAP). Risk temporarily downgraded from 'High' to 'Medium' in light of the suspension of developments in 2023. |
| New risk R11 added: | Potential adverse impacts on the community and local environment of sewage discharges into the River Lune. Suggested risk level – 'Medium' |
| R21 downgraded | Failure to engage a full complement of Parish Councillors could hinder effective operation of the Council. Downgrade from 'High' to 'Low' following co-option to the vacant position. |

In other areas, risk levels have generally remained static and no other clearly emerging or escalating risks have been identified.

Councillors are asked to consider the draft Risk Register and make suggestions for amendments or the inclusion of any additional risks.

3. Recommendations

- (1) That, subject to any changes or additions, the draft Risk Register for 2024/25 is approved and adopted.**

Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council

Meeting Date: 1st May 2024

Agenda Item:

9

Report of: The Parish Clerk

Review of Policies and Procedures

1. Introduction

Recommended practice is that local councils annually review their significant policy documents, normally at the annual meeting. The current policies can be viewed on the Parish Council website at <https://aldcliffewithstoddaypc.org/policies/>

2. Detail

The Parish Council completed a review of its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at its meeting on 7th February 2024.

A review has been undertaken of the following key policy documents (last approved on 10/05/2023) to ensure they remain accurate, current and fit for purpose.

- a) Information Management and Data Protection Policy**
No proposed changes
- b) Privacy Notice**
No proposed changes
- c) Publication Scheme**
No proposed changes
- d) Complaints Procedure**
No proposed changes

Councillors are asked to consider these conclusions and make suggestions for any further amendments necessary.

3. Recommendations

(1) That, subject to any changes or additions, the following existing policy documents are confirmed, approved and adopted:

- a) Information Management and Data Protection Policy
- b) Privacy Notice
- c) Publication Scheme
- d) Complaints Procedure



Agenda Item: 10

Planning Application Comments & Decisions

Update for April – May 2024

Application Number / Description	Parish Council Comment	Planning Authority Decision / Status
Part A – Applications decided since the last update		
24/00218/FUL Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of a single storey rear extension and first floor extension over garage. 10 Craiglunds Court, Aldcliffe.	Response submitted with no objection in principle to the proposal, but asking that due consideration is given to the Parish NDP and associated Design Codes. (Min 23/102)	Application Permitted

Part B – Undecided Applications		
23/00283/FUL (March 2023 – Outside the Parish) Erection of 45 dwellings (C3) with associated infrastructure including landscaping, open space, access, highway and drainage. Land At Grid Reference 347281 459157, Ashton Road, Lancaster. Parish Council resolved that a consultation response be submitted asking that the City Council refuses the application (Min 23/004)		
23/00687/FUL Temporary change of use of agricultural land and construction of an area of hardstanding to allow for compound parking in association with proposed development at land off Ashton Road. Land at Grid Reference 347281 459157, Ashton Road, Lancaster. Parish Council resolved that a response letter be submitted objecting to and seeking refusal of the planning application (Min 23/043).		
23/01140/FUL Partially retrospective change of use of land to 3 no Gypsy/Traveller pitches comprising 3 touring caravans and 3 mobile homes, siting of a day room, erection of a barn, installation of a septic tank and creation of an area of hardstanding. Parish Council resolved: That a response letter be submitted objecting to the application on the same grounds as for application 21/01581/FUL (Min 23/063(1)).		
23/00049/REF (Appeal) Appeal against refusal of application 22/00885/OUT. Up to 70 dwellings, Land North of Ashford House, Ashton Rd, Lancaster. Parish Council resolved: That a further response be submitted to the Planning Inspector restating and updating the Parish Council's grounds for objecting to the development. (Min 23/091)		

Part B – Undecided Applications

24/00325/FUL Demolition of existing porch, erection of rear and side extension, construction of raised decking at rear, installation of steps to new entrance to replace existing and replace existing front door with window. Arna Wood Farm West, Arna Wood Lane, Aldcliffe.

Resolved: That a response be submitted, expressing no objection in principle, but asking that the Parish's Design Codes be applied. (Min 24/005)

ALDCLIFFE WITH STODDAY PARISH COUNCIL



Parish Council Meeting, 1st May 2024

Agenda Item 13 – Payments for Authorisation

Payee & Detail	£
Scotforth Parish Hall. Hire of Meeting Room for Parish Council meeting, 1 st May 2024 (see note 1)	25.20
Derek Whiteway – Parish Clerk salary and expenses, April 2024	153.82
HMRC – PAYE deductions, April 2024	38.40
LALC – Annual Subscription 2024/25	52.63

Note 1. St Paul's Parish Hall Invoices for PC meetings are approved in advance and paid at the end of each calendar month.