

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

MEARE PARISH Council

www.meare-pc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
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 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 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 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

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

14/04/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Paul Rucelle

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

14/04/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

MEARE NAME 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 2023, that:

	Agreed		
	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
			✓

*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:

15th May 2023

and recorded as minute reference:

34 REFERENCE

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

Chairman

C. Bend

Clerk

G. T. Tucker

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SITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Meare Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	85,240	73,404	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	41,400	42,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	3,223	208,286	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	15,844	13,708	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	5,813	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	40,649	34,356	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	73,404	269,813	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	73,404	269,813	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	97,233	94,569	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	197,957	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 do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

G.T. Tucker
Date 15th May 2023

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

C. Pennington
as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 34 B

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

SIGNATURE REFERENCE 15th May 2023

**Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council
Held on Monday 17th October 2022, 7.30pm in the Chapel**

Public participation

Present: Cllrs Bennetts (Chair), C. Foster, T Foster, Hoskins, James, Neale, Richards, Winters, Wren and the Clerk Gerard Tucker

In attendance: 14 members of public

There was no public participation

2022/

128. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Cllr Heather Shearer.

129. Minutes of the previous meeting. The suggestion of an additional speed indicator device was not made by Cllr James. A sentence was added which informed of the historic value of the roadside hedge near the Fish House. The minutes were then considered accurate and were approved by the Council before being signed by the Chair.

130. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

131. Summary of actions from the previous meeting

- a. The clerk to purchase anti-virus software to protect the laptop.
- b. The Village Hall and Parish Councillors are encouraged to meet and discuss the conditions of releasing the loan
- c. The cctv detail prepared by Cllr James to be circulated.
- d. The paper detailing the appropriate IT support measures with input by Cllr Field to be circulated.
- e. The clerk to contact Towns to complain about inappropriate driving habits
- f. A training session to prioritise the actions of the council and to address the changes to the Code of Conduct is to be organised for Sunday 9th October in the Community Church commencing at 7.30pm

132. County and District Councillor reports

Cllr Shearer provided an overview of actions of the County and District Council. A newsletter has been prepared (and distributed) which informs of the challenges of bringing the different authorities together under a unitary umbrella.

133. Highways

134. Parish Matters including:

- a. To determine what youth facilities the clerk is to research.**
- b. Purchase of trees for the picnic area and school(s)**
- C. Maintenance contract: To agree regular areas of the village that need attention, prior to inviting tenders.**
- d. To consider cctv quotes for the playing field**

122. Complying with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).

The clerk, together with Cllrs Field and T Foster have been exploring the appropriate systems that would ensure compliance with GDPR, provide back-up for the IT systems and virus protection. A short paper has been prepared by the clerk with input from Cllr Field informing of the choices to be considered. A company called Netwise which is used predominately by town and parish councils is the most cost effective, particularly as it also provides the opportunity to create our own website. The paper is to be circulated to all councillors once

amended, meanwhile, the clerk is encouraged to purchase anti-virus software for the laptop. Cllr Field will advise on the appropriate system to purchase.

123. External Auditors report.

The clerk informed that during the hand over of responsibilities between him and the previous clerk, the Annual Return (AGAR) had been inappropriately completed, with one box ticked stating that no significant changes had been made to the asset register. The auditor had identified the purchase of the tractor and topper and informed that this box was wrongly marked. No further action is required.

124. Finances

a. Proposal to set up a separate Finance Committee. Cllr Bennetts informed that there was already a Finance committee consisting of Cllrs Neale, Bennetts, T Foster and the clerk. Having clarified the situation, the clerk was asked to amend the website to reflect the presence of a finance committee.

b. Summary of account. The clerk had previously circulated information on the transactions and balances of the council. No questions were raised and Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Neale and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the financial summary. 11-0-0

c. S137 Funding requests

- i. Parish magazine September edition shortfall £210.00
- ii. Hire of community church rooms, July and September £ 60.00
- iii. Contribution towards cemetery tree surgery works £540.00
- iv. Editors contribution – parish magazine £150.00

d. Invoices to be paid.

Payment	Amount £
Malcolm Sweet	670.00
Somerset Association Local Councils	434.63
Steve Edwards – website support	108.00
Mendip DC – Election expenses	2,049.26
Clerk's expenses	201.20
PKF Littlejohn – Auditors expense	360.00
Malcolm Sweet	170.00

125. Planning –

i. Application No 2022/1784/HSE

Proposal: Single storey rear extension. Rendered garden wall to be replaced with a low level rendered wall.

Location: Angel House, Porters Hatch, Meare

The Parish Council raised no objections or observations on this application. The reduction in the occupiers carbon footprint by working from home was noted.

ii. Proposed development at Eclipse Works, Ashcott Road

The council is unable to endorse the redevelopment of Eclipse Works to residential until such time as full plans are prepared. However the concept of providing more affordable housing in the parish meets with the objectives of the council.

126. Correspondence – none received that has not already been distributed

127. Summary of Actions

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

The next meeting will be on Monday 21st November, 7.30pm in the Chapel