

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

Freshwater Parish Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes means that this authority: prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
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.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
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.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
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.	✓		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.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
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.	✓		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
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	
		✓	

\*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:

18/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

18/6/24 FEC meeting 17th 12.

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

Chair



Clerk



WWSB.Freshwater Parish Council WEBSITE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Freshwater Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	246,658	259,895	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. 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	295,287	458,646	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	194,246	23,418	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	147,132	154,152	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	11,191	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	329,164	375,346	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	259,895	201,270	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	225,668	231,381	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	456,725	456,725	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	165,000	158,654	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)		
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓

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]*

Date

18/06/2024

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

18/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

18/6/24 M/T/G/R/J2 R/F/P/C meeting

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

*[Signature]* REQUIRED

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

In respect of

Freshwater Parish Council

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

We have noted inconsistencies between the internal auditors response to objective D on the internal audit report and the councils response to assertion 1 on the annual governance statement.

The internal auditor has identified a control deficiency with regards to the following control objective:

"The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate".

As such the council should have responded to assertion 1 on the annual governance statement "No" as the council did not have in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review:

- Question 11a has not been answered in the Accounting Statements however 11b has been answered as N/A. The answer should have been No.

The smaller authority have not provided an engagement letter scoping the internal audit, no minutes appointing internal auditor for 2023/24 nor minutes containing their annual review of the effectiveness of the internal audit arrangements. Therefore they do not have the required evidence, or minute, that they are complying with the requirements.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

To be in line with best practice we recommend that when minuting the appointment of the internal auditor, the council record they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor on an annual basis.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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

External Auditor Name

BDO LLP - Southampton F EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

DocuSigned by:

JAMES EVANS

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SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

22 September 2024