PARISH MEETINGS ONLY

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 Part 3PM

ONLY to be completed on behalf of PARISH MEETINGS OF PARISHES NOT HAVING PARISH COUNCILS:

- **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 for Parish Meetings on completing Part 3PM of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

1. Every Parish Meeting in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3PM 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** is completed by the Parish Meeting's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2** are to be completed and approved by the Parish Meeting.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the Parish Meeting.
3. The Parish Meeting **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published **before 1 July 2020.**
4. A Parish Meeting with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or a Parish Meeting 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 2020. Reminder letters 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 2020
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

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

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, a Parish Meeting must publish on a suitable website or display in the local area for a period of 14 days, the following information:

Before 1 July 2020:

- 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 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2020:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 & 2 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion for local electors and interested parties, that you also publish or display 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.

Guidance notes for Parish Meetings on completing Part 3PM of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

- The Parish Meeting **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this Annual Governance and Accountability Return. *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 Annual Governance and Accountability Return is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Where amendments are made to the AGAR after it has been approved and before it has been reviewed by the external auditor, the Chairman should initial the amendments and if necessary republish the amended AGAR and recommence the period for the exercise of public rights. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs may be incurred.
- The Parish Meeting **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 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2020. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Chairman, and provide a relevant email address and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return covers all the bank accounts. If the Parish Meeting 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 your explanation.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, 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 2019) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2020).
- The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Meeting, **must** set the period for the exercise of public rights. From the commencement date for a single period of 30 consecutive working days, the approved accounts and accounting records can be inspected. Whatever period the Chairman sets it **must** include a common inspection period – during which the accounts and accounting records of all smaller authorities must be available for public inspection – of the first ten working days of July.
- The Parish Meeting **must** publish 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 2020.**

Completion checklist – '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 Parish Meeting's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		

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

Part 3PM Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

ENTER NAME OF PARISH MEETING

This Parish Meeting's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this Parish Meeting'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 Parish Meeting.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.			
B. This Parish Meeting complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
C. This Parish Meeting assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
D. The precept 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.			
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.			
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 Parish Meeting certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the Parish Meeting had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")*			
L. The Parish Meeting has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			

For any other risk areas identified by this Parish Meeting adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

DD/MM/YY DD/MM/YY DD/MM/YY

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

*If the response is 'no' you must include a note to 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).

Part 3PM Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF PARISH MEETING

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 2020, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	*No**	*'Yes' means that this Parish Meeting:*
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 Parish Meeting 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 met the needs of this Parish Meeting.*
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 Parish Meeting 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.*

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the Parish Meeting will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published or displayed with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a Parish Meeting on:

DD/MM/YY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman **SIGNATURE REQUIRED**

Part 3PM Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

ENTER NAME OF PARISH MEETING

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	*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			*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			*Total amount of precept received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts			*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs			*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the Parish Meeting's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments			*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			*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			*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			*The value of all the property the Parish Meeting owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings			*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 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 Parish Meeting.

Signed by the Chairman before being presented to the Parish Meeting for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YY

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

DD/MM/YY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Part 3PM Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of ENTER NAME OF PARISH MEETING

1 Respective responsibilities of the Parish Meeting and the auditor

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2019/20

(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. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify/do not 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 2020.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YY

*Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)