



Agenda Item 7.1 County Cllr Report

Mike Sole's
November 2024



Kent County Councillor -Canterbury South
Canterbury City Councillor – Nailbourne



With so many road works, and diversion routes, it can often be chaotic, especially when the A2 is closed. I was pleased to be at a meeting with KCC, National Highways and **Barham** Parish Council. As a result of discussions, I am hopefully for some improvements to signage and better communication next time there are planned closures of the A2.

With the Nailbourne likely to flow again, I have also been involved in discussions about alternative bin collections arrangements. Although the details are yet to be finalised, it is likely that residents in Railway Hill and Out Elmstead Lane in Barham, will be issued with purple sacks and received weekly collections if the large truck cannot get to them. Recycling collection will be suspended (but can go in the purple sacks or taken to the household waste centre) and garden waste will not be collected, but automatic refunds will be issued to subscribers. All affected residents will receive a letter near the time to confirm the final arrangements.

I met with the Canterbury Branch of the NFU. As might be expected, the impact of the budget was discussed. I also raised the issue of the installation of a replacement **Grove Ferry** bridge in 2026 and a lower weight limit being implemented next year until the new bridge is in place.

At KCC I attended the meeting of full Council and the Growth & Economic Development and Communities Committee.

At Canterbury City Council I presented the draft budget to cabinet which is currently out to public consultation.

I was very pleased to be a member of the Lord Mayor's Award panel. It was a pleasure to be involved in helping decide who might receive an award for their community service, and details of the winners will be announced next year.

I also attended the Remembrance Day service at Canterbury Cathedral.

Finally, may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.



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Agenda Item 7.2 City Councillor Report

Councillor Lee Castle

Little Stour & Adisham Ward - Canterbury City Council



November 2024 Update lee.castle@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk

As we approach the Christmas season, November has been a particularly busy month, with various meetings and casework across our communities.

I attended the **Littlebourne** Parish Council meeting, where discussions covered a range of topics, including the need for additional bins, timelines for the revised Local Plan, and ongoing casework involving tree management, school engagement, and dog fouling.

At the **Adisham** Parish Council meeting, attention was focused on budget planning and upcoming projects for 2025. The Adisham Woods issue remains unresolved due to an ongoing appeal process, and I have raised additional enforcement concerns that require engagement. Other recurring issues, such as tree management, embankment cutting, and fly-tipping, were also addressed.

The **Wickhambreaux** Parish meeting reflected a mix of plans for the year ahead and disappointment over the Pear Orchard development approval. While the development meets planning requirements, I have urged the parish council to collaborate closely with residents to monitor compliance with site restrictions and vehicle movement during construction. Advocating on behalf residents in planning matters remains a priority.

November also involved participation in planning committee meetings, a budget briefing, a climate change briefing, and a scrutiny subcommittee discussion on the biodiversity emergency. These sessions highlighted the council's efforts on various initiatives, including city centre levelling-up projects.

In **Ickham**, I addressed a housing case and was pleased to observe the success of the local litter-picking group over the past year—a testament to the dedication of community volunteers.

Progress has also been made in the **Littlebourne** Speed Watch program, thanks to new volunteers. In a personal capacity, I have volunteered to support the **Bekesbourne/Patrixbourne** and **Ickham/Wickhambreaux** joint groups as they establish similar initiatives. Residents interested in volunteering can contact their parish clerks for details.

The council continues to advance the joint venture with Ashford Borough Council to address **Stodmarsh** mitigation. While I personally question this national policy, it is critical to meet housing delivery targets to avoid entering the presumption stage, which could lead to developments bypassing local planning policy.

In December, I will attend the **Littlebourne** and **Adisham** parish meetings, along with a planning committee meeting. I am also participating in a local river group meeting to prepare for the harsher winter months, receiving updates from the Environment Agency and Southern Water.

Lastly, I commend all villages for their outstanding Christmas tree displays. For those who have seen my own home, it is no secret that I too, am a fan of Christmas lights!

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Agenda Item 8. Any S101 Delegated Authority Items to be noted by Council.

Planning Application No: CA/24/01930

Proposal: Erection of an agricultural storage building.

Location: Land Between Springfield Cottages And Rosewood, Bekesbourne Lane, West Of Bekesbourne Hill, Bekesbourne, Kent,

Outcome: 2 out of 8 councillors responded, one with no objections, one objecting to this application. Therefore, no comments were submitted as a minimum of three councillors are required to respond to s101 delegated authority.

Agenda Item 10.1 Highway Matters: Any Updates

The Clerk has chased again the reinstatement of the roundels on Station road. Hopefully there will be a response to present at the meeting.

Permission has been granted by the landowner for the 'junction ahead' signs on the approach to Aerodrome Road. These should now be installed imminently.

Agenda Item 10.2 20mph at Patrixbourne

Printing costs associated with the public engagement:

My current HP Instant in plan covers up to 300 pages per month, which usually is sufficient.

There are approximately 350 homes in Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne, for one page of a4 for the traffic survey plus one page of a4 for the playground survey will total 700 pages.

This in turn will require me to increase the printing bundle for the one month to either:

- Up to 700 pages at a cost of £25.49 +VAT.
- Up to 1500 pages at a cost of £49.49 +VAT

Alternatively, a distribution company has quoted to print and deliver both for £360+VAT

Proposed Public Engagement Leaflet:

Agenda Item 10.4 Speedwatch

A date has been requested for training now we have sufficient (hopefully) numbers for volunteers.

Agenda Item 11.1 To note October- December payment schedule & approve any new payments.

August/September Payment Schedule

Payments Made in August/September as per financial regulations.

Date	Type	Payment	Amount
16 th September 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
30 th September 24	SO	Clerk September Salary	As per salary Sheet
15 th October 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
30 th October 24	SO	Clerk October Salary	As per salary Sheet
15 th November 24	DD	Hugofox	£23.99
2 nd December 24	SO	Clerk Nov Salary	As per Salary Sheet

Payments Due for Approval:

Recipient	Detail	Amount
N. Purcell	HP Ink reimbursement December	TBC (as per agenda item 10.2)
N. Purcell	Clerk Phone bill (October-Dec)	£15.00

Agenda Item 11.2 To Approve the Q2 Accounts

The Q1 Accounts run from July- Sept. Clerk salary have been paid as per the salary slips each month, which our Internal Auditor checks each year as part of the council's internal audit.



BEKESBOURNE WITH PATRIBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

December 2024 Agenda Pack

Bekesbourne with Patribourne Parish Council			
Quarter 2 Accounts 2024/25 (1st July-30th September)			
Receipts			
Date:	Ref	RECEIPTS	£
		Total Income	£ -

Payments			
Date:	Reference:	PAYMENTS	£
01.07.24	SO	N. Purcell (salary)	£ [REDACTED]
15.07.24	DD	HugoFox	£ 23.99
30.07.24	SO	N. Purcell (salary)	£ [REDACTED]
15.08.24	DD	HugoFox	£ 23.99
30.08.24	SO	N. Purcell (salary)	£ [REDACTED]
09.09.24	FPO	N.Pucell (Ink April)	£ 9.99
09.09.24	FPO	N. Purcell (Phone April-May)	£ 10.00
09.09.24	FPO	N. Purcell Ink (June)	£ 9.99
09.09.24	FPO	L.Robbins Internal Audit	£ 105.00
09.09.24	FPO	KALC (membership)	£ 400.46
09.09.24	FPO	AJG Insurance	£ 1,389.34
09.09.24	FPO	ROSPA (Inspection)	£ 11.60
09.09.24	FPO	Ovenden Allworkd (fence re)	£ 870.00
16.09.24	DD	HugoFox	£ 23.99
30.09.24	SO	N. Purcell (salary)	£ [REDACTED]
		Total Payments	£ 6,242.75

Cash Held	£	26.13
Treasurers Balance as at 30.09.2024	£	74,986.93
Instant Access Savers Balance as at 30.09.24	£	1.09
Total:	£	75,014.15



Agenda Item 11.3 S106 Funding (Update/Playground Discussion)

Overview of S106 Funding Allocations

As previously noted, The Parish Council has received the following funds under Section 106 agreements, specifically allocated for improving open spaces and community facilities:

1. **Children's Outdoor Play Areas**
 - **Amount:** £23,428
 - **Purpose:** Dedicated to upgrading and improving children's outdoor play areas within open spaces.
2. **Outdoor Sport**
 - **Amount:** £7,063
 - **Purpose:** To enhance and upgrade outdoor sports facilities in open spaces.
3. **Amenity Open Spaces**
 - **Amount:** £9,184
 - **Purpose:** For the improvement and enhancement of general amenity open spaces.
4. **Parks and Gardens**
 - **Amount:** £4,332
 - **Purpose:** Allocated for the improvement of parks and gardens within open spaces.
 - **Note:** This allocation can be combined with the Amenity Open Spaces funding for larger projects.

Progress Update and Consultation with RGMC

On Monday, 9th December, Cllr Sladden and the Clerk met with the Chair of the Recreation Ground Management Committee (RGMC) to discuss the aspirations and goals of the committee regarding the recreation ground and pavilion. Initial discussions mentioned potential uses for the S106 funds including:

- Installation of a new fire door for the sports pavilion.
- Roofing and guttering repairs to address their current poor condition.
- Addition of benches around the recreation ground.
- Installation of spectator seating to support community sports.
- Improving entrance access and installing protective matting for parking areas to minimize grass damage.

The Chair of the RGMC will present these information to their committee for further discussion and will aim to provide feedback at the Parish Council's January meeting.

Community Survey and Next Steps for the Playground: To engage the community in decision-making, Cllr C.Sladden has prepared a draft survey, with an electronic version of

the same created by Nicola. The survey aims to gather input from residents on how the funds should be spent.

Proposed Timeline:

- **Survey Distribution:** Deliberately delayed to ensure streamlined processes, aligning with discussions and potential actions.
- **Survey Results Collection:** End of January.
- **Review and Discussion:** Equipment quotes will be reviewed at the March meeting.
- **Project Implementation:** Begin installation in spring/summer to protect the ground at the recreation area, ensuring minimal disruption.

Bekesbourne Recreation Ground

Bekesbourne with Patricxbourne Parish Council now has money to install the accessible roundabout, which we have been saving up for. We may also be able to provide one or two other items. Because delivery, installation and safety surface costs are not quoted in the catalogues, we are not sure how much we can do, but we would like to get some idea of what you would like.

Who is completing this questionnaire? Please tick:

Family with children aged.....		Young couple		Interested resident	
Teenager(s) Aged.....		Grandparent(s)		Tick if a Rec user from outside the parish.	

Write down two things you would like. If you are replying as a family, please say how many people chose the item. Put a star or tick beside your favourite.

We have asked 11 local children what new equipment they would like. Here are their ideas

Springy seesaw for two people. Outdoor table tennis table A little house. Outdoor Chess
Wooden adventure trail/ trim trail (stepping stones, chain bridge etc.) Bouldering wall. Swing for several people such as Dragon Bus.

Do you have any other ideas or suggestions? Use the back of the sheet if you have a lot to say!

We may also have a separate pot of money for more seating, and also for adult gym equipment. Please tick if you would like, and would use, adult gym equipment.

Please return to

The Council is asked to approve the survey for distribution to the community.

Plaque Replacement at the Playground

While the council considers the addition of new equipment using S106 funds, it may also wish to allocate additional funds to replace the missing plaque that originally identified the playground as the Albert Wilson Playground. The plaque, which has been absent for many years, was a tribute to Mr. Wilson, and a relative of his has expressed a strong desire to see it reinstated. Unfortunately, the original plaque's whereabouts remain unknown.

S106 Funding Process (For Council to Note)

The process for spending S106 funds involves the following steps:

1. **Allocation:** Funds are earmarked for specific purposes (e.g., children's play areas, outdoor sports).
2. **Proposal Development:** Parish Councils identify potential projects and ensure alignment with funding criteria.
3. **Community Engagement:** Consultation through surveys or public meetings to gather input on proposed projects.
4. **Approval:** The Parish Council submits proposals to Canterbury City Council for review and approval.
5. **Implementation:** Once approved, the Parish Council oversees the procurement and completion of the project.

Conclusion

The Parish Council will work closely with the RGMC and Canterbury City Council to ensure the S106 funds are allocated efficiently and in line with community needs. This collaborative approach will ensure projects benefit the community while adhering to S106 guidelines.

Agenda Item 11.4- Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Completion:

Forvis Mazars LLP have concluded the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24. I am delighted to inform you that Bekesbourne with Patricbourne Parish Council have completed another successful audit.

The external auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24 states:

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.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required that the 2023 period of public rights covered 30 working days and commenced no later than 1 July 2023. This requirement was not met last year but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, which covers the previous year's public rights period. The Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can always meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no to assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved.

The Council has not fully implemented recommendations made in the 2022/23 external audit report. The Council answered yes to the relevant assertion in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement (assertion 7), claiming it has taken appropriate action in respect of audit reports. In future, the Council should ensure that appropriate action in response to audit recommendations is taken within a reasonable time.

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

In undertaking the review of the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return it came to our attention that in 2024 the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to provide electors with a period of 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July, to inspect the accounts. The Council should ensure that in 2024/25 they comply with the Regulations and respond 'No' to the relevant assertion in its Annual Governance Statement as the assertion is retrospective and refers to compliance during the relevant financial year rather than in respect of it.

Finance Officer explanation for council to note unfortunately, last year the council were one day short for their exercise of public rights period, and this year- one day too many. This unfortunately means in writing it states 'we did not meet the requirements'.

Please refer to 'Section 3- External Auditors Report and certificate 2024' that has been included within this report over the next few pages:

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

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

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

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

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

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

Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

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

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

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

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

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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.			✓ NONE
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. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
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 (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).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) 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

15/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit



ENTER NAME OF **LIONEL ROBBINS**

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date

05/15/05/2024

***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:

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne 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:
	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:

10/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

12.2

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

Chair

Clerk

 REQUIRED

 REQUIRED

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	171357	23711	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	18401	22214	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	38796	6301	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	8078	9249	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	196765	15452	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	23711	27527	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	23711	27527	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	332900	332900	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	0	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)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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



Date

12/05/2024

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

10/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

M12.4 REFERENCE

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



REQUIRED

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.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required that the 2023 period of public rights covered 30 working days and commenced no later than 1 July 2023. This requirement as not met last year but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, which covers the previous year's public rights period. The Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can always meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no to assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved.

The Council has not fully implemented recommendations made in the 2022/23 external audit report. The Council answered yes to the relevant assertion in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement (assertion 7), claiming it has taken appropriate action in respect of audit reports. In future, the Council should ensure that appropriate action in response to audit recommendations is taken within a reasonable time.

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

In undertaking the review of the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return it came to our attention that in 2024 the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to provide electors with a period of 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July, to inspect the accounts. The Council should ensure that in 2024/25 they comply with the Regulations and respond 'No' to the relevant assertion in its Annual Governance Statement as the assertion is retrospective and refers to compliance during the relevant financial year rather than in respect of it.

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.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable.

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Forvis Mazars LLP

Date

19 September 2024

Within the conclusion letter to the Clerk and Finance Officer the following which was not part of the 2024 AGAR, but was added as an advisory for this current year 2024/25 AGAR:

Email management

There have been amendments to the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide in relation to email management and the use of '.gov.uk' domains. The March 2024 version of the Practitioner's Guide, points 5.210 and 5.211, state that:

- All Parish, Town and Community Councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications. Your community, suppliers and partners will now reasonably expect a local council to have a .gov.uk domain name.*
- To assist with compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is advised that clerks provide official .gov.uk email accounts to their councillors, which must only be used for official council business.*

While the Practitioner's Guide 2024 does not mandate the use of '.gov.uk' email addresses, we would expect the Council and its councillors to have a generic email address to use for official Council correspondence. If the Council and councillors are not using generic email address by 31 March 2025, then this could result in either a qualification or other matter on the 2024/2025 AGAR.

Agenda Item 11.5 Draft Budget 2025/26

Councillors to discuss the drafted budget as circulated via email.

Council to resolve to adopt a budget. If council Approve the budget as drafted, the precept can be broken down into the following:

Bekesbourne with Patrixbounre PC Precept Breakdown 2024/26										
Actual Amount to be billed 2024/25										
Year	Total Precept	Council Tax Base	Annual @ Band A	Annual @ Band B	Annual @ Band C	Annual @ Band D	Annual @ Band E	Annual @ Band F	Annual @ Band G	Annual @ Band H
2024/25	£23,388	368.03	£42.37	£49.43	£56.49	£63.55	£77.67	£91.79	£105.92	£127.10
			Monthly @ Band A	Monthly @ Band B	Monthly @ Band C	Monthly @ Band D	Monthly @ Band E	Monthly @ Band F	Monthly @ Band G	Monthly @ Band H
			£3.53	£4.12	£4.71	£5.30	£6.47	£7.65	£8.83	£10.59
Actual Amount of Increase 2024/25										
Year	Total Precept Increase	Council Tax Base	Annual @ Band A	Annual @ Band B	Annual @ Band C	Annual @ Band D	Annual @ Band E	Annual @ Band F	Annual @ Band G	Annual @ Band H
2024/25	£264	368.03	£0.48	£0.56	£0.64	£0.72	£0.88	£1.03	£1.19	£1.43
			Monthly @ Band A	Monthly @ Band B	Monthly @ Band C	Monthly @ Band D	Monthly @ Band E	Monthly @ Band F	Monthly @ Band G	Monthly @ Band H
			£0.04	£0.05	£0.05	£0.06	£0.07	£0.09	£0.10	£0.12

Council to resolve their precept request figure for 2025/26.

Agenda item 13 Allotments

Plot Updates:

1. **Plot 8 to Plot 5 Swap:**

The tenant previously assigned to Plot 8 has successfully transitioned to Plot 5.

2. **Plot 10 Tenancy Status:**

The tenant of Plot 10 previously communicated, via a third party, an intention to vacate the tenancy. The Clerk clarified that such a decision must be directly confirmed by the tenant. To date, no direct update has been received. However, upon inspection, the plot appears to have been vacated.

3. **Plot 4 Tenancy Adjustment:**

The tenant of Plot 4 has requested to reduce their allotment to half the current size. Interest in the remaining half has been expressed by a previous tenant, suggesting a potential resolution for this adjustment.

Observations:

- **Popularity of Half Plots:**

Demand for half plots is on the rise, reflecting a shift in tenant preferences and possibly indicating a trend toward smaller, more manageable allotments.

- **General Condition:**

A recent inspection revealed no significant issues at the allotments. There are a few vacant plots to address, but overall, the site remains in good condition.

Recommendations:

- Follow up with the tenant of Plot 10 to confirm their intention to vacate and proceed with reallocation if the plot remains unclaimed.
- Finalise arrangements for the reallocation of half of Plot 4 to the interested former tenant.
- Continue monitoring the trend toward half-plot requests and consider incorporating this preference into future allotment planning.

Agenda Item 14 Aspinall Close Garages

Flipping, and general issues regarding the Garages at Aspinall/Cramner Close has been reported. I have contacted southern housing with the following email(yet to receive a response):

Good afternoon,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to enquire about the garages located on Cranmer Close in Bekesbourne. Specifically, I would like to confirm whether these garages are owned and managed by Southern Housing.

There is a significant issue with fly-tipping at this location, which is affecting the surrounding environment and community. The state of the garages and the accumulation of rubbish are concerning, and it appears to require immediate attention.

If these garages are under Southern Housing's management, could you please let me know if there are any plans or measures in place to address the current situation? Additionally, I would appreciate it if you could take steps to resolve the issue of fly-tipping and improve the overall condition of the area.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,

Nicola Purcell