

ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL

You are summoned to an **Extra Ordinary** meeting of **Arthuret Parish Council** that will be held in the **Parish Council offices** on **Monday 30th September 2024 at 7pm**

Nicola Rushworth – Parish Clerk
Council Rooms
9 Esk Street
Longtown
CA6 5PU
clerk@arthuretparishcouncil.gov.uk

25th September 2024

Nicola Rushworth

AGENDA

1	Apologies for Absence To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence
2	Declaration of Interest To receive declarations by elected and co-opted members of interests in respect of items on this agenda
3	Public Participation To receive representation from members of the public on issues relating to items on this agenda. <i>Members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes and are not permitted to speak at any other time during the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chairman</i>
4	External Auditor Report and Certificate To consider the external auditor's report and certificate for the year ending 31st March 2024 and note there were issues raised for council to comment on (<i>copy herewith</i>)

Smaller Authority Name: **ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL**

NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL AUDIT

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

- 1 The audit of accounts for ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL for the year ended 31 March 2024 has been completed and the accounts have been published.
- 2 The Annual Return is available for inspection by any local government elector in the area of ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL on application to:

TINA ROBINSON (Responsible Financial Officer to Arthuret PC)

**9 ESK STREET
LONGTOWN
CA6 5PU**

TEL: 01228 791739 E: apc791739@gmail.com

Inspection hours – Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 2.00pm

- 3 Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £0 for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by TINA ROBINSON

Date of Announcement: 25th SEPTEMBER 2024

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ARTHURST 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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	*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
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

***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:

24-6-2024

and recorded as minute reference:

500-5-1

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

Chair

Clerk

<http://www.arthurstparishcouncil.co.uk>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

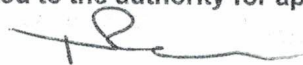
ARTHURGT PARISH COUNCIL.

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	22,004	22,004	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	62,208	71,388	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	33,330 RESTATE	35,180	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	35,468	37,344	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	60,130	92,502	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	22,004 RESTATE	(1,274)	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	22,004 RESTATE	(1,274)	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	227,435	236,075	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)			✓	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

24-6-24

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

24-6-2024

as recorded in minute reference:

S00-S.2

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



Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Arthuret 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 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 the 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.

Section 1 of the AGAR was completed as approved on 24/06/2024 with a minute reference 500.5.1. Section 2 of the AGAR was dated on the same day with a minute reference 500.5.2. The minutes found on the Parish Council's website clearly show both Sections 1 and 2 were approved at the meeting held on 24/06/2024 but recorded as minute item 491.1. As such, the minute references reflected on the AGAR are incorrect. We would expect this to be reflected in the council's response to Assertion 3 on the 2024-25 return and any future minute references to match back to the reference provided in those minutes.

A review of the Council's website, the Finance section and using the search function, has identified that the Council does not appear to have fully met the requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulation 13 (1) which states that the final audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return should, on conclusion of the audit, be available for public access, which includes publication on the Council's website. The Council amended Section 2 of their 2022/23 return year during the 2022/23 review process however only the original version of the return is visible on the Council's website. In addition, the Notice of Conclusion included in the 2022/23 section of the website is the notice of conclusion of the 2022 review process. Therefore, it appears that the 2023 notice of conclusion has not been published as is required by regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Council should bring these points into line with the regulations as soon as practically possible.

We identified during our review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that box 1 of the prior year column (2023) on Section 2 - Accounting Statements did not agree to the figures provided on the 2022-23 form. No explanation was provided for this amendment and the box has not been marked as 'Restated' to bring it to the attention of the reader. As the figures for the 2024 year appear to be correctly stated we do not believe this should impact the 2024-25 return.

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

On review, the council's year end reserves balance is negative. This is because one of the bank accounts contained several outstanding cheques yet to be paid out as at 31/03/2024. However, after this date the Council have informed us that they have written off £2,568.32 of older uncleared payments and had this been done before the period end then the balance would not have been negative. The Council should keep this under review and ensure that they have sufficient reserves to cover expenditure. Per Paragraph 5.33 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide, best practice suggests this should generally be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose.

The Council have failed to ensure that there is a sound system of internal controls during the period which is correctly reflected on the AGAR. The Council have plans in place to resolve this and we expect to see these plans in action for 2024-25.

Incomplete information was provided with the initial supporting data submitted for review with regards to significant variances, which was later provided on request. The Parish Council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

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

 **MOORE**

External Auditor Signature



Date

20/09/2024