

MINUTES of the **MEETING** of the **EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING** held in the **LONGTOWN MEMORIAL HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE** on **MONDAY, 21st JULY 2025** at **8PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Sir JFS Graham (Chair), Councillor G Routledge (Vice Chair), Councillor M Gunson, Councillor C Johanssen, Councillor E Jeffrey and Councillor J Copleston

ALSO PRESENT – Parish Clerk and RFO

APOLOGIES

Cumberland Councillor T Pickstone and Councillors M Irving, R Graham and C Adams

Minute Number	
045/25	<p>Apologies for Absence To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence</p> <p>RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cumberland Councillor T Pickstone and Councillors M Irving, R Graham and C Adams</p>
046/25	<p>Declaration of Interest To receive declarations by elected and co-opted members of interests in respect of items on this agenda</p> <p>RESOLVED that no declarations were received</p>
047/25	<p>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 (this is the total time for public participation) and are not permitted to speak at any other time during the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chair</i></p> <p>RESOLVED that no members of the public were present</p>
048/25	<p>Financial Matters</p> <p>048/25.1 Bank Reconciliation to 31st March 2025 <i>(copy herewith)</i> RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation was received and noted</p> <p>048/25.2 Internal Auditors Report The Internal Auditors report which reviewed the Parish Councils finances, operating controls and working practices was submitted to the meeting RESOLVED to note the Internal Auditors report and that there are significant improvements with the financial controls and monitoring</p>

RESOLVED to note that some areas still need improvement, such as annual risk assessments, financial control statement, obtain a debit card to reduce re-imbursments and better allotment processes

048/25.3 External Auditor Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR 2025)

- a. To consider the approval of the Annual Governance Statement for year ending 31st March 2025 (*copy herewith*)

RESOLVED that this was approved

- b. To consider the approval of the Statement of Accounts for year ending 31st March 2025 (*copy herewith*)

RESOLVED that this was approved

- c. To authorise the Chair to sign Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2025

RESOLVED to authorise the Chair to sign sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2025

- d. To receive notification of Public Rights & Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return for accounts year ending 31st March 2025 (*copy herewith*)

RESOLVED that the notification of Public Rights & Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return for accounts year ending 31st March 2025 was received

ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL

BANK RECONCILIATIONS AT 31st MARCH 2025

BARCLAYS CURRENT ACCOUNT - 70122297

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	-3,353.32		
Transfers from 40479306	97,128.38	Transfers to 40479306	99,001.41
Income	99,757.93	Expenditure	94,761.58
		Balance c/f	-230.00
	<u>193,532.99</u>		<u>193,532.99</u>

Bank Reconciliation

Balance per statement @ 31.3.25		1,500.00
Less o/s cheques		
N Rushworth	705714	1159.63
David Beatty	705715	445.99
onecom	705716	101.58
Lanc Shredding	705708	22.80
		1,730.00
		<u>(230.00)</u>

BARCLAYS PREMIUM ACCOUNT - 40479306

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	1,185.78		
Transfers from 70122297	99,001.41	Transfers to 70122297	97,128.38
Income			
Interest Received	523.54		
		Balance c/f	3582.35
	<u>100,710.73</u>		<u>100,710.73</u>

BARCLAYS GRATUITY ACCOUNT - 90167215

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	893.65		
Interest Received	13.26		
		Balance c/f	906.91
	<u>906.91</u>		<u>906.91</u>

	Balance B/F 1.4.24	Balance C/F
Account - 70122297	(3,353.32)	(230.00)
Account - 40479306	1,185.78	3,582.35
Account - 90167215	893.65	906.91
	<u>-£ 1,273.89</u>	<u>£ 4,259.26</u>

I certify that I have checked the above figures and am satisfied, to the best of my belief and knowledge, that they accurately represent the financial position of the Parish Council at the end of the year indicated.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

ARTHURGET PARISH COUNCIL AUTHORITY

HTTPS://ARTHURGETPARISHCOUNCIL.WEBPAGEADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.		✓	
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		✓	
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.		✓	
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.		✓	
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 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 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 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 2023/24 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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

02/07/2025 DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

JOANNE BATEY, RNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

J Batey SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

02/07/2025

*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).

ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT – Arthuret Parish Council Y/E 31.3.2025

SUBJECT	TEST	SATISFACTORY?	NOTES	REPLY
Standing Orders	1. Has the Council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations? 2. Have levels of delegation been correctly authorised? 3. Have items or services above a deminimis amount been competitively purchased?	Yes Yes Yes	Minute 450 and 486 Consider improving the Minute regarding Per FR - consider a scheme of delegation policy. For the majority, although an incident where quotation was available online for over £3,000. Were other quotes sent? Should it have been a confidential item?	
Risk management arrangements	1. Do the minutes record the Council carrying out annual risk assessments? 2. Are financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	No NO	However, risk assessment available online. Considers financial control statement	

<p>Income controls</p>	<p>1. Does the precept recorded in the cash-book agree to the Unitary Authority's notification and the public record of precepted amounts?</p> <p>2. Was the precept considered, approved and adopted by the full authority and not a committee?</p> <p>2. Are security controls over cash adequate and effective?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Minute 610+618-1 Precept and Budget must be agreed at full council meeting, not Finance. Minutes do not give sufficient detail Information outstanding with Auditment committee.</p>	
<p>Budgetary Controls</p>	<p>1. Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support of its plans?</p> <p>2. Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the Council?</p> <p>3. Are there any significant variances from the budget?</p>	<p>See notes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>For 2024/2025 the available budget was arithmetically incorrect, for 2025/2026 the new RFO has a much improved budget. Monitoring report quarterly. Council rooms Grants no explanations on report</p>	

	<p>4. Have these been explained?</p> <p>5. Have reserves (general and earmarked) been established and reviewed annually as part of the budget process?</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>NO</p>	<p>See above.</p> <p>Although considered for 2025/2026, previous years demonstrate that reserves (general + earmarked) have not been reviewed thoroughly.</p> <p>RFO raised concern at being informed of folk play area reserves, not yet identified.</p>	
<p>Payroll Controls</p>	<p>1. Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council?</p> <p>2. Are other payments to the Clerk/RFO reasonable and approved by the Council?</p> <p>3. Has PAYENIC been properly operated by the Council?</p> <p>4. Have the correct pension contributions been applied?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>NO</p>	<p>Suggest Council get a debit card to avoid reimbursements.</p> <p>Council to consider auto-enrolment into next pension now over threshold.</p>	
<p>Assets Control</p>	<p>1. Are the Assets/Property Registers up to date?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Dates confusing on online FA register, acquisition values missing on several items.</p>	

	<p>2. Are there appropriate levels of insurance cover in place for land, buildings, public, employers liability etc.</p> <p>3. Are regular checks of assets undertaken? <i>Reports only available to Dec 2024 + no record of actions taken on issues raised.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Insurance schedule checked against asset register.</p> <p><u>Play areas</u> Weekly checks by trained counsellor Annual check done professionally</p>	
<p>Year End Procedures</p>	<p>1. Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis?</p> <p>2. Do accounts agree with the cash book?</p> <p>3. Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p><i>Receipts + Payments.</i></p>	
<p>Bookkeeping</p>	<p>1. Is the cash book maintained & up to date?</p> <p>2. Is the cash book arithmetically correct?</p> <p>3. Is the cash book regularly balanced?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p><i>However, payment for petty wreath in wrong column.</i></p> <p><i>Monthly</i></p>	

	<p>4. Are receipts & invoices easily identified in cash book?</p> <p>5. Are there vouchers for all transactions?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes - expenditure No - income</p>	<p>No income receipts made available</p> <p>Expenditure invoices should be numbered</p> <p>no correspond to cashbook.</p>	
Payment Controls	<p>1. Are payments in the cash book supported by invoices, authorisation (person or minutes)?</p> <p>2. Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?</p> <p>3. Does the council comply with its financial regulations – are procedures in place for the acquisition of formal tenders and quotes?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes - requires improvement</p>	<p>Poppy wreath £23? in wrong column in cashbook.</p> <p>Processes can be difficult to follow per the minutes, consider improving.</p>	
Website	<p>1. The Council publishes information on a free to access website in accordance with the relevant legislation?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Council has a new website - much improved compared to previous one.</p> <p>^</p>	
Public Notice	<p>1. Does a copy of the Public Notice clearly identify the statutory 30 working day period for public inspection?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Not all minutes appear online, specifically confidential items not being minute numbered.</p>	

	<p>2. Are the relevant dates minuted at the same time as the AGAR?</p> <p>3. Is the Notice published on the website?</p> <p>4. Has the Council complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR?</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Not sure.</p>	<p>See Minute 491-2</p> <p>Council moved to new website Sept 24 so evidence online isn't available</p>	
<p>Risk Management Arrangements</p>	<p>1. Does a scan of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?</p>	<p>No</p>		
<p>Income Controls</p>	<p>1. Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Suggest improvement to Audit process.</p>	
<p>Petty Cash Procedures</p>	<p>1. Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by invoices/receipts?</p> <p>2. Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting and verified?</p>	<p>No</p> <p>NO</p>	<p>nothing seen from Audit committee who are in receipt of ISO petty cash.</p> <p>as above.</p>	

<p>Bank Reconciliation</p>	<p>1. Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly on the receipt of statements? 2. Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?</p>	<p>yes NO</p>	<p>Monthly</p>	
<p>VAT Procedures</p>	<p>1. Are VAT reclaims carried out in a timely manner and in line with current HMRC requirements?</p>	<p>NO yes</p>	<p>More frequent reclaims would help cashflow.</p>	
<p>Allotments</p>	<p>1. Do appropriate signed tenancy agreements exist? 2. Does an appropriate register of tenants (including monitoring debtors) exist?</p>	<p>? ?</p>	<p>Despite requests from RPO, nothing received from Allotment Association. These need to be available to council.</p>	
<p>Leases</p>	<p>Are leases (if applicable) reviewed appropriately</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Leases should be reviewed on a more regular basis and thoroughly.</p>	

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:

Significant improvements have been made with financial controls and monitoring compared to previous years under new RFO.

Council need to be mindful there are areas for improvement.

Some monthly expenditure should not be being paid by the clerk and reimbursed.
Council to set up DP or SO for one.com

Date: 02/07/25

Report by: J. Batay Internal auditor

J. Batay (signature)

Date:

Replies approved by: Council member

..... (signature)

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 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 2024/25

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 2025**.
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 2025**. 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 2025
 - 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 2024/25

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 2025 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 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 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) 2024/25

- 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 2025.
- 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 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- 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 2025**.

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 2025 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

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

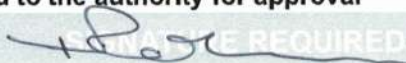
ARTHWURST PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	22,004	(1,274)	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	71,388	75,671	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	35,150	24,624	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	37,344	44,871	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	92,502	49,891	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	(1,274)	4,259	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	(1,274)	4,259	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	RESTATE 131,754	130,234	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 2025 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 REQUIRED

Date

1-7-25
DATE REQUIRED

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

ARTHURST PARISH COUNCILORITY

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 2025, that:

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

***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:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

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 2025; 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 2024/25

(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 authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

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 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL

BANK RECONCILIATIONS AT 31st MARCH 2025

BARCLAYS CURRENT ACCOUNT - 70122297

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	-3,353.32		
Transfers from 40479306	97,128.38	Transfers to 40479306	99,001.41
Income	99,757.93	Expenditure	94,761.58
		Balance c/f	-230.00
	<u>193,532.99</u>		<u>193,532.99</u>

**Bank Reconciliation
Balance per statement @ 31.3.25**

1,500.00

Less o/s cheques

N Rushworth	705714	1159.63	
David Beatty	705715	445.99	
onecom	705716	101.58	
Lanc Shredding	705708	<u>22.80</u>	
			1,730.00
			<u>(230.00)</u>

BARCLAYS PREMIUM ACCOUNT - 40479306

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	1,185.78		
Transfers from 70122297	99,001.41	Transfers to 70122297	97,128.38
Income			
Interest Received	523.54		
		Balance c/f	3582.35
	<u>100,710.73</u>		<u>100,710.73</u>

BARCLAYS GRATUITY ACCOUNT - 90167215

Balance b/f at 1/4/24	893.65		
Interest Received	13.26		
		Balance c/f	906.91
	<u>906.91</u>		<u>906.91</u>

	<u>Balance B/F 1.4.24</u>	<u>Balance C/F</u>
Account - 70122297	(3,353.32)	(230.00)
Account - 40479306	1,185.78	3,582.35
Account - 90167215	893.65	906.91
	<u>£ 1,273.89</u>	<u>£ 4,259.26</u>

I certify that I have checked the above figures and am satisfied, to the best of my belief and knowledge, that they accurately represent the financial position of the Parish Council at the end of the year indicated.

ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL INCOME 2024/25

date	description	rcpt no	ref	Precept	Beckburn Comm. Pot	Beckburn Grants	Hall Burn Grants	Other Grants	Allotment Rents	Utility refund	Other	Pitch Fees/room fire	Interest Received	Vat received	Totals
	Budget			75,671.00	5,600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,240.00	0.00	0.00	1,100.00	80.00	0.00	83,691.00
	Balance			0.00	6680.50	2200.00	0.00	300.00	100.00	5619.27	610.06	-1100.00	456.80	1737.10	16,603.73
	Income to date			75671.00	12280.50	2200.00	0.00	300.00	1340.00	5619.27	610.06	0.00	536.80	1737.10	100,294.73
3.4.24	Allotment tents	D/C	1						230.00						230.00
9.4.24	Grantscape	D/C	2		5,831.72										5,831.72
19.4.24	Cumberland Council precept	D/C	3	75,671.00											75,671.00
10.5.24	Incredible Edibles	D/C	4					300.00							300.00
3.6.24	Interest earned 40479306	D/C	5										158.97		158.97
3.6.24	Interest earned 90167215	D/C	6										3.34		3.34
12.7.24	Cumbria CF	D/C	7		6,448.78										6,448.78
19.7.24	Eon	D/C	8							1,261.08					1,261.08
19.7.24	HMRC	D/C	9												
2.9.24	Interest earned 40479306	D/C	10										202.01	1,737.10	1,737.10
2.9.24	Interest earned 90167215	D/C	11										3.35		3.35
10.9.24	Grantscape	D/C	12			2,200.00									2,200.00
2.12.24	Interest earned 40479306	D/C	13										113.34		113.34
2.12.24	Interest earned 90167215	D/C	14										3.37		3.37
20.1.25	Zurich Insurance	D/C	15							4,358.19					4,358.19
3.3.25	Interest earned 40479306	D/C	16										49.22		49.22
3.3.25	Interest earned 90167215	D/C	17										3.20		3.20
26.3.25	Allotment Rents	D/C	18						1,110.00						1,110.00
26.3.25	Longtown P'ship	D/C	19										160.06		160.06
26.3.25	Swimming Club	D/C	20										450.00		450.00

Explanation of variances 2024/25 – pro forma

Name of smaller authority:

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all **Blue** highlighted boxes

Now, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £500);
- variances of more than £100,000 must be explained even where this constitutes less than 15%;

Please ensure variance explanations are quantified to reduce the variance excluding stated items below the 15% / £500 / £100,000 threshold

	2025	2024	Variance	Variance	Explanation Required?		DO NOT OVERWRITE THE BOXES HIGHLIGHTED IN RED/GREEN	Note: If an explanation is required for the variance of Box 4 and the explanation refers to a change in hours or a change in pay rates, please could you note the previous hours/rates and
	£	£	£	%	Is > 15%	Is > £100,000		
1 Balances Brought Forward	-1,274	22,004					Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	75,671	71,388	4,283	6.00%	NO	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	24,624	35,180	-10,556	30.01%	YES	NO		Utility refund received in 23/24 of £12,301.42, this year refund was £1,261.08; VAT claim in 23/24 of £4,793.18, this year claim received of £1,737.10; this year insurance claim received of £4,388.19. Community pot & grants received in 23/24 total 16,283.54, this year totalled £14,780.05
4 Staff Costs	44,871	37,344	7,527	20.16%	YES	NO		Previous clerk left 31/5/2024, gratuity of £7,675 paid to clerk on leaving through NEST
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO	NO		
6 All Other Payments	49,891	92,502	-42,611	46.06%	YES	NO		In 2023/24 there was increased expenditure due to £17,593.00 paid to E-on for electric costs, hence refund above and additional use of electric heating due to boiler not working; £10,800.00 for the purchase of 2 speed indication devices; £10,621.00 for building work carried out to the office following water damage; £2,756.00 for work to damaged railings and £1,155.00 paid to Longtown Community Centre for the food bank.
7 Balances Carried Forward	4,259	-1,274	5,533	-434.30%	NO	NO		
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	4,259	-1,274	5,533	-434.30%	NO	NO		
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and Assets	130,234	131,754	-1,520	1.15%	NO	NO		
10 Total Borrowings		0	0	0.00%	NO	NO		

Smaller authority name:

ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE

1. Date of announcement Monday 21 July 2025

2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.

Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2025, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

TINA ROBINSON – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER (RFO)
9 ESK STREET, LONGTOWN CA6 5PU
E: rfo@arthuretpariscouncil.gov.uk T: 01228 701739

commencing on Tuesday 22 July 2025

and ending on Tuesday 2 September 2025

3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:

Moore (Ref AP/HD)
Rutland House
Minerva Business Park
Lynch Wood
Peterborough
PE2 6PZ



5. This announcement is made by Tina Robinson - RFO

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect the accounting records of smaller authorities. If you are a local government elector or registered to vote in the local councils' elections, then you are able to ask questions about the accounts and object to them.

The right to inspect the accounting records

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year, they must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. You must then provide the council with reasonable notice of your intentions. Following this, by arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records and supporting documents. You may be required to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

If you have any questions regarding the accounting records, you should first ask your smaller authority. This must be done during the 30-day period for the exercise of public rights. You may also ask the appointed auditor questions about an item in the accounting records. However, the auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions so is limited with their response. To avoid any confusion, it is advised that you put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections

Should you view something as unlawful or believe there are matters of wider concern in the accounts, you may wish to object. If you are a local government elector, you have the right to ask the external auditor to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item is contrary to the law and should be reported as a matter of public interest. This must be done by telling the appointed auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you believe it to be unlawful or think a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide clear evidence to support your objection, and this should be done in writing and the copied to the council.

You should not use the 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. Complaints of this nature should be taken to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor.

A final word

Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, the auditor must consider the cost that will be involved. They will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision, you may have to pay for the action yourself.