

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Dalton with Newton Town 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 13/05/24 with a minute reference 2286. Section 2 of the AGAR was dated on the same day and had the same minute reference. On investigation (due to the same minute references used), the minutes found on the Parish Council's website clearly show both Sections 1 and 2 were approved at the meeting held on 13/05/24 and recorded as minute item 13(a) and 13(b) respectively. The reference provided related to the minute page and not the individual minute item. 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.

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

The internal auditor has provided a 'no' response at control objective K on their report. This suggests that the council incorrectly claimed exemption from audit in the previous (2022-23) year. As the council was not exempt and did not claim exemption, the answer to this point should have been 'not covered'.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

Date

15/09/2024