

## Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

East Keswick Parish Council – WY0029

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor report 2021/22

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 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 smaller authority failed to properly approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2022, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1. The smaller authority has subsequently ratified the approval of the AGAR on 15 April 2025.

The smaller authority has disclosed that it made proper provision during the year 2021/22 for the exercise of public rights, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 4. However, we are aware that it failed to do this and therefore should have answered 'No' to this assertion.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR:

- The responses given in Section 1, Box 9 and Section 2, Box 11 are not consistent. The smaller authority has confirmed that it is not a sole managing trustee therefore, Section 1, Box 9 should have been answered 'N/A'.
- Section 2, Box 2, the annual precept, does not agree to the figure published by the precepting authority. The figures in Boxes 2 and 3 should read £19,500 and £7,957 respectively. All grants, including Council Tax Support Grant, should be shown in Box 3, as per the guidance notes on the AGAR. In addition, the smaller authority has not restated the prior year figures in Boxes 2 and 3, which were also incorrect for the same reason, these figures should read £19,500 and £9,249 respectively.
- Section 2, Box 10 for the prior year is incorrectly stated and should read £30,270.

The smaller authority did not arrange for an independent internal auditor to review the internal controls and give their conclusion in the Annual Internal Audit Report during 2021/22 and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 6. In future years, the smaller authority must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

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

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2022/23 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July 2022. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights in future.

The internal auditor was not independent of the smaller authority's financial controls and procedures, in particular the completion of the AGAR, and the smaller authority must disclose this by answering 'No' to Assertion 6 of the Annual Governance Statement on the 2022/23 AGAR. In future years, the smaller authority must maintain an independent system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2021/22

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 2022.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

10/06/2025

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