

Taunton Parish Council Annual Meeting – 16 May 2023

DATE & TIME: Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 6.00pm
PLACE: John Meikle Room, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE

Present: Councillors Simon Clarke, Tom Deakin, Caroline Ellis, Gemma Evans, Bev Fernandes, Ed Firmin, Giuseppe Frascini, Vanessa Garside, Marcia Hill, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Simon Lester, Nick O'Donnell, Amber Packer-Hughes, Federica Smith-Roberts, Connor Solle, Judy Stainthorpe, Martin Straus, Paul Tooze, Ray Tully.

Officers: Donna Ford (Town Clerk), Marcus Prouse (Specialist – Governance), Jo Comer (Civic and Engagement Lead), Craig Stone (Operations) Tracey Meadows (Democracy and Governance Lead), Renata Kozub (Grants Officer) Sally Jones (Deputy RFO)

Also

Present: Five members of the public and four Unitary Councillors.

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

01.05.23 **Election of Chair**

Councillor Tom Deakin of Taunton Council opened the meeting and sought nominations for the appointment of Chair.

Councillor Nick O'Donnell was duly nominated.

RESOLVED that Councillor Nick O'Donnell be elected Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/24

Councillor Nick O'Donnell signed their declaration of office.

02.05.23 **Election of Deputy Chair**

The Chair sought nominations for the appointment of Deputy Chair.

Councillor Vanessa Garside was duly nominated

RESOLVED that Councillor Vanessa Garside be elected as Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/24

Councillor Vanessa Garside signed their declaration of office.

03.05.23 **Apologies for Absence**

All Councillors were in attendance.

04.05.23 **Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

Members noted that two declarations were outstanding and arrangements were being made to complete these.

- 05.05.23 **Declarations of Interests**
- There were no Declarations of Interest received.
- 06.05.23 **Minutes of the previous meeting**
- RESOLVED** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 11 April 2023 were a correct record of the meeting.
- The chair subsequently signed the minutes.
- 07.05.23 **Name and style of Council**
- Members considered the legal name and style of the Council as listed.
- Adopt the style of a Town Council
 - Adopt the title of Taunton Town Council
 - Adopt the use of the title 'Chair' in place of 'Chairman' throughout all Council policies and documents.
 - Designate the Chair of the Council as Town Mayor and the Deputy Chair of the Council as Deputy Town Mayor
- RESOLVED** that the Council approved the recommendations as listed above.
- 08.05.23 **Key Policies**
- Members considered the four key policies as listed.
- Standing Orders
 - Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference
 - Financial Regulations
 - Members' Code of Conduct
- RESOLVED** that the Council approved the Key Policies as listed above.
- 09.05.23 **To appoint a Leader of the Council**
- Members sought nominations for the appointment of a Leader of the Council.
- Councillor Deakin was duly nominated.
- No other nominations were received.
- RESOLVED** that Councillor Tom Deakin be elected as Leader.
- 10.05.23 **To appoint a Deputy Leader of the Council**
- Members sought nominations for the appointment of a Deputy Leader of the Council.
- Councillor Straus was duly nominated.
- No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Councillor Martin Straus be elected as Deputy Leader.

11.05.23

Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

Members considered the Committee Membership and Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED

- The Terms of Reference for each Committee as listed below.
- To appoint Chair's and Vice-Chair's to each committee as listed below.
- To appoint Members to each committee as listed below.

Finance and Governance (9)	Cllr Ray Tully (Chair) Cllr Giuseppe Frascini (Vice-Chair) Cllr Tom Deakin Cllr Amber Packer- Hughes Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts Cllr Judy Stainthorpe Cllr Paul Tooze <i>Vacancy</i>
Community Services Committee (9)	Cllr Martin Straus (Chair) Cllr Bev Fernandes (Vice-Chair) Cllr Simon Clarke Cllr Caroline Ellis Cllr Gemma Evans Cllr Ed Firmin Cllr Vanessa Garside Cllr Sue Lees Cllr Nick O'Donnell <i>Cllr Ray Tully</i>
Planning, Development and Transport (9)	Cllr Marcia Hill (Chair) Cllr Connor Solle (Vice-Chair) Cllr Vanessa Garside Cllr Ed Firmin Cllr Bev Fernandes Cllr Judy Stainthorpe Cllr Martin Straus Cllr Paul Tooze Cllr Ray Tully
Personnel Sub-Committee (5)	Cllr Ray Tully (Chair) Cllr Amber Packer-Hughes Cllr Ed Firmin Cllr Richard Lees Cllr Sue Lees
Grants Sub-Committee (7)	Cllr Amber Packer-Hughes (Chair) Cllr Richard Lees (Vice-Chair) Cllr Simon Clarke

	Cllr Caroline Ellis Cllr Bev Fernandes Cllr Sue Lees Cllr Judy Stainthorpe <i>Cllr Ray Tully</i>
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12.05.23 **General Power of Competence (GPOC)**

Members considered the requirements for adopting the General Power of Competence.

RESOLVED that the Council adopted the use of the General Power of Competence as it met the criteria of having more than two thirds of elected Councillors, and a qualified clerk.

13.05.23 **Signatories/Payment authorisers**

Members considered appointing a minimum of four Members to authorise payments and sign cheques.

RESOLVED that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council and Chair and Vice Chair of The Finance and Governance Committee will become signatories to authorise payments and sign cheques.

14.05.23 **Local Government Pension Scheme**

Members considered applying for admitted body status in the Local Government Pension Scheme for employees of the Council.

RESOLVED to apply for admitted body status in the Local Government Pension Scheme for all employees of the Council.

15.05.23 **Acquisition of Vehicle**

Members considered the purchase of a vehicle to enable the Town Warden to carry out their duties.

RESOLVED that the item was deferred to the next meeting to enable further details and costings on the preferred option of an Electric Vehicle to be supplied.

16.05.23 **Reports from the Town Clerk**

Members considered the four options that had been consulted on at various events throughout the last month and online. It was noted the Peacock concept for the Taunton Town Council proposed Logo was the favoured concept along with the Defendamus Crest associated with the Mayoralty.

Members also discussed the requirement for equipment purchases for the Town Warden.

RESOLVED that Members agreed to;

- Approve the Peacock concept design for Taunton Town Council, with further refinements on design to take place before official use.
- Approve the continued use of the Defendamus Crest associated with the Taunton Mayoralty.
- To grant delegated authority of up to £6,500 to the Clerk to purchase and procure the necessary equipment for the Town Warden.

17.05.23

Other Policies

Members considered the adoption of the below policies

- Member/Officer Relations
- Dispensation Policy
- Annual Investment Strategy
- Grants Policy

RESOLVED to adopt the policies.

18.05.23

Calendar of Meetings

Members noted the Calendar of Meetings.

RESOLVED to approve the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2023/24, details of which can be found on the website. www.taunton-tc.gov.uk

(The meeting ended at 7.53pm)

Signed:

Dated:

Meeting:	Full Council Meeting of Taunton Town Council 13 June 2023
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Acquisition of an E-Combo (L2H1)

Background:

Following a recruitment process for a town warden, a cargo van is now required to enable the town warden to carry out the duties of the role.

Usage:

Cargo vans are the preferred and the most reliable mode of transportation for the town council that will support the role of the town warden. The van will involve the movement of equipment and materials tools, hedge and grass trimmers, road signage, sandbags and cones. It would also be used to transport gazebos, weights, printed material, tables and chairs and any other items the Council requires transporting from one location to another. The cargo van will play a crucial role in the logistic operations of the council.

Expected items to be in the vehicle.

Equipment	Consumables	PPE Check List
Hand tools (various)	Garden Waste Sacks	High Vis Vest
Rake	Disposable Gloves	High Vis Jacket
Shovel / Spade	Weed Killer	High Vis Trousers
Stiff Brush	Nuts, Bolts and Screws	Steel Toe Cap Boots
Toolbox	Black bags	Wellingtons
Litter Picker	Hand Sanitiser	Hard Hat
Ladder	Cloths	Face Shield
Saw	Cleaning Liquids	Chainsaw Helmet
handheld sprayer (weeds)	Water	Ear Defenders
Storage cabinet for weedkiller	Paint	Ear Plugs
Leaf Blower	Brushes	Safety Glasses
Strimmer		Dust Mask
Mower		Work Gloves
Roadside signage		Work Trousers
Sandbag		Work Shorts
Cone		Sweatshirt
Chevron		T-Shirt
Paint brushes		Dust Suit
Water Can		Spray Shield
Pressure washer		Chainsaw Trousers
		Chainsaw Gloves

Efficiency and productivity:

A cargo van will provide the town council with the benefit of efficient and productive transportation, particularly for moving bulky or large items. The van will offer sufficient room for the tools and equipment needed. It also allows for large volumes of equipment to be moved safely and quickly without damaging the goods.

Cost-effective:

Using a E-van is a cost-effective decision for the town council. The overall running costs of an electric vehicle are much lower due to having very fewer moving parts, not least the cost of charging is much less than re-fuelling.

Although the running costs of an electric vehicle are lower, the purchase cost can be higher due to the technology, components and batteries.

External Funding

Work is being done to identify any environmental or government grants that could help towards the leasing or purchasing of an electric vehicle. There is no road tax costs for electric vehicles currently. Vehicles registered after April 2025 will pay the lowest rate of £10 in the first year.

Brand marketing:

Vans serve as a fantastic marketing tool for brand awareness. Helping to raise the profile of the town council within Taunton. The use of decals or wraps on a cargo van, showing the council's logo, website and contact details, will ensure the council is making itself accessible and visible to the community. It can be an excellent way to promote brand recognition and awareness.

Security:

Cargo vans ensure that the products and equipment are kept safe whilst in transit, reducing the chances of damage, theft, or loss. Many cargo vans come with specific security features such as alarms, locks, immobilizers, and cameras, which can prevent theft and protect items from being taken.

Mileage:

In a typical day, the town warden will leave Deane House and drive to Comeytrowe Park (4 miles) then on to Staplegrove (3 miles) and then on to Sherford Road (3.3 miles), and their final job of the day would be at Maidenbrook Country Park. (3.3 miles) and then back to Deane House (2.1 miles).

In this typical day, the jobs have taken the warden to each corner of Taunton and would equal 15.7 miles in a typical day. That equates to 80 miles per week (rounded up) providing an annual mileage of 4,160 miles per year.

Considering the occasional evening and weekend working and a long distance pick up, we are estimating 5000 miles per year. As this is a new role and are using our best estimates, it is recommended to add in 2,000 miles as a complete contingency. It has been calculated the annual milage will not exceed 7,000 miles per annum.

This is equating to an average of 27 miles per day. This figure has been discussed and assessed in conjunction with Somerset Council's parks and opens spaces team

and the account manager at Somerset Council who looks after 600+ fleet vehicles, who have both agreed that this is a generous calculation and would be sufficient for the type of role within Taunton Town Council.

Adding a charging supply:

The distribution board at Deane House is full, so installing another charge point is not possible. (The police asked and due to the capacity of the distribution board were unable progress with their request)

Charging:

Most e-combo vans will offer a range of 150 and 220 miles per full charge. Based on the mileage allowance above, it is expected that 1 charge per week will be needed to meet the needs of the role.

Belvedere Road Car Park Electric Charging Points.

The car park offers 6 electric vehicle charging points, where the E-Combo can be charged over-night.

Somerset Council's climate change team who has been responsible for installing the electric charging supplies in Belvedere Road car park, have confirmed that there is capacity to charge an electric vehicle in the public car park, as there are often spaces overnight.

The charging points situated in front of the barrier to the Somerset Council car park at Deane House are 22Kwh, which would take 4hrs to fully charge the vehicle or less. The charges at the front of Deane House are 11Kwh, they would take 11hrs to fully charge the vehicle or less.

www.ZapMap.co.uk provides indicative costs for charging, which are as follows:
E-Berlingo (140 miles) – would cost 12p per mile and therefore a full charge would cost £16.80.

Taunton Town Council would need to set up an account with Swarco and be charged as a customer.

When the vehicle is not charging, it would occupy a Taunton Town Council car parking space at Deane House.

For Consideration:

Option 1 – Purchase a second-hand E-combo cargo van using a normal finance arrangement (Hire Purchase). Paying monthly at the end of the agreement, own the vehicle.)

Option 2 – Long term new lease provides lower monthly payments, but vehicle could take up to 10 months before a vehicle becomes available.

Option 3 – No purchase

Summary of Cost:

The prices below show the monthly amount payable over a 48-month period. The total cost is inclusive of APR rates and finance charges for the duration of the lease.

Please note: Delivery of New leases: Somerset Fleet Services have advised that Stelantis Group who own Peugeot, Citroen and Fiat have had orders placed over a year ago and still have no confirmed delivery dates. Somerset Fleet Services are estimating that it will be 8 to 10 months before delivery on any new lease.

E-Combo Medium Range	Total Cost (including Finance)	APR Rate	Month lease length	Monthly Amount Excluding VAT	Servicing Including
Rowcliffe's Vauxhall	Currently unable to provide quote for new E-Combo.				
Somerset Fleet Services	£35,280.00	FIXED	48	£735.00	Yes
Ford	£37,736.00	FIXED	48	£723.67	Yes
Volkswagen	£49,947.00	FIXED	48	£631.71	Yes

Second Hand

There are second-hand e-combo vehicles available under 2 years old with varying mileage. The second-hand e-combo vehicles would be available immediately and on a Hire Purchase scheme (HP).

Rowcliffe's Vauxhall, have provided a medium specification. Suggesting that a £500 deposit and a monthly charge of £669 a month, over 60 months will see Taunton Town Council own the vehicle after the HP agreement.

Total amount payable £40,140.



Example second-hand vehicle currently on the market:



Citroën e-Berlingo 800 50kwh Driver M Pro Auto MWB 5dr (7.4kW Charger)

Cash: £25,490+VAT

Finance: £620.65 per month at 10.9% APR

Recommendation:

To provide delegated powers to the Leader and Clerk to spend up to £700 per month on a second hand readily available, e-combo L2H1 long wheelbase vehicle. Where the total amount payable does not exceed £45,000 over 60 months (5 years).

Providing delegated powers will ensure timely decisions can be made on the hire purchase of a suitable vehicle.

Storage of the town warden's van equipment is currently being considered.

Meeting:	Full Council Meeting – 13 June 2023
Agenda Item:	7
Subject:	Taunton Town Council Fees and Charges

Background:

Following the transfer of a number of parks and play areas to Taunton Town Council. The town council are looking to seek income from commercial or sole use of its parks and open spaces, allotments, and sporting activity.

The prices for the town's council parks and spaces have been set by Somerset Council prior to the creation of the town council. The fees and charges are calculated based on the cost of maintenance, officer time to facilitate and review event plans, risk assessments and insurance documentation and issue permits.

The allotments in Taunton are now under the responsibility of the Town Council. This report shows the annual lease rent for the allotments, which were set from 1st April 2023.

Section 93 of the 2003 Local Government Act allows authorities to charge for services that they have a power (but not a duty) to provide. And while the income they can earn from these charges is restricted to the cost of providing them, there is no restriction on how the costs are calculated. So, while fees and charges cannot be used to make a profit, they could provide the opportunity to invest in infrastructure, because all aspects of service provision can be included in cost. Authorities can also use differential charging based on people's ability to pay.

<https://www.cipfa.org/cipfa-thinks/articles/fees-and-charges-a-significant-income-for-councils>

Summary of Fees and Charges:

Taunton Town Council Fees and Charges	01/04/2023
	31/03/2024
	Fee (£) Including VAT)
Allotment Annual Fee	
Galmington	550
Hamilton	1500
Higher Holway	250
Holly Close Eco	50

Obridge/Priorswood	950
Rowbarton	670
Stoke Road	195
Turners (Fairwater)	1755
Whitmore	545
Parks and Play Areas Daily Charge	
Local Sites	
Comeytrove Park	129
Galmington Park	129
Greenway Recreation Ground	129
The Grove	129
Hawthorn Park	129
Hudson Way Open Space	129
Lyngford Park	129
Penny's Field	129
Priorswood Playing Fields	129
Neighbourhood Sites	
Taunton Green	240
Victoria Park	240
Hamilton Gault Park	240
French Weir Park	240
Goodland Gardens	240
Events organised by or on behalf of a friends of group	0
<i>Additional charge when administration is involved, such as notifications to local residents, raising a permit and checking application details. Plus VAT</i>	50
Commercial Fitness Activities	
single park activity for 12 months	239
Use multiple parks for 12 months (+ 50% for each additional park)	239
One off hire	50
Sports Pitch Hire	
Junior Sized Pitch Hire (per session)	30
Junior Sized Pitch Hire (No changing facilities)	20
Senior Sized Pitch Hire	60
Senior Sized Pitch Hire (No changing facilities)	30
American Football (training senior)	55

American Football (training junior)	30
American Football (match senior)	165
American Football (match junior)	330
American baseball (Taunton Green)	68
American baseball (Taunton Green) training (BBTRA)	23
Tennis Courts (Taunton Green and Vivary Park) Per hour	6
Tennis Courts (Annual pass)	36
Market or Stall Holder Pitch Fees Town Council Events	
(Non - trading) Direct Debit Sign ups	80
(Non - trading) Promotion and Awareness Raising	0
Trading Pitch for products / food	80
Trading Pitch for Service	80

Considerations:

Please note that the Council budget was set using income figures from previous years and reducing these figures will have a negative impact on the overall budget as parks and land are the current main source of income.

Please see the income targets below broken down by each park.

Expected annual income from the parks:

Victoria Park	£4,600
Galmington Park	£3,000
Hamilton Park	£2,800
Priorswood Park	<u>£1,000</u>
TOTAL	£11,400

*Points to note

- The prices were originally derived from Taunton Deane and have not significantly changed since then.
- The fees do include an 11% increase to cover inflation, this is reflected in the budget.
- Junior pitches are smaller than senior pitches, hence the difference in price.
- Training sessions are cheaper as the pitches do not have to be lined.
- American baseball match costs are higher for juniors as there are multiple games where the seniors have a single game.

Dispensation:

Friends of Groups, who spend time volunteering to look after their local community parks are given dispensation from the charges and rates above.

Local charities will be entitled to enquire about usage for free unless they are using any of the above listed assets for any commercial purpose or if the area requested significantly affects the use of the park by others.

Recommendations:

To adopt the charges set by Somerset Council for the year 2023/2024, as the calculations were used to set the income targets for 2023/2024 Taunton Town Council.

Adopting the Somerset Council fees and charges rates will ensure continuity and minimise disruption with hirers and event organisers.

The rates will be applied retrospectively to any commercial activity that has taken place in our parks from 1 April 2023.

Meeting: Full Council Meeting – 13th June 2023

Agenda Item: 9

Subject: Dignity at Work Pledge and Policy

Background:

Dignity at Work Pledge:

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

By our council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that our council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Definition of Civility and Respect

Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.

Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Signing up to the pledge is a simple process, which requires councils to register and agree to the following statements:

Statement
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors.
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

Copy and paste or click this link to watch a video about the Pledge:

[Civility and Respect Project | #TakeThePledge - YouTube](#)

Dignity at Work Policy:

One of the Civility & Respect project objectives is to strengthen the governance arrangements across our sector to better support councils. The Dignity at Work Policy is the first of a series of new or revised governance documents which are being developed by the project team. The documents have been reviewed by a focus group made up of clerks, councillors, monitoring officers, and county associations, and approved by NALC and SLCC for use.

The Dignity at Work policy will replace any previous Harassment and Bullying Policy. It encompasses behaviours beyond bullying and harassment, and zero tolerance, with the aim of dealing with concerns before they escalate. It has been produced with supporting guidance because it is so important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

The Policy and guidance are attached separately.

Recommendation

To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge and to adopt the Dignity at Work Policy.



TAUNTON TOWN COUNCIL

Dignity at Work Policy

POLICY/DOCUMENT UPDATE TIMELINE

Policy/Document Number	Version	Owner	Excel File No.	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
DWP1	V1	TC				TC

Distribution:

Internal: All TTC Staff

External: Website / Councillors / Partners

Adopted:

Taunton Town Council

Dignity At Work Policy

Taunton Town Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expects all Taunton Town Council Councillors, officers, and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with Taunton Town Council.

Purpose

Taunton Town Council is committed to creating a working environment where all Taunton Town Council employees, Taunton Town Councillors, contractors, and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying.

[Optional – for Councils who have committed to the pledge] In support of this objective, Taunton Town Council has signed up to the Civility Pledge, as a commitment to civility and respect in our work, and politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Further information about the Civility and Respect Pledge is available [NALC](#) & [SLCC](#).

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by Town Clerks and all employees engaged to work at Taunton Town Council. Should agency staff, or contractors, have a complaint connected to their engagement with Taunton Town Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the Chair of the Taunton Town Council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the Taunton Town Council the complaint should be raised to the deputy chair / Taunton Town Council's Personnel Working Party.

Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat Taunton Town Council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and Taunton Town Council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the Taunton Town Council's Grievance Procedure.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g., employees, contractor, Taunton Town Councillor), however, Taunton Town Council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, Taunton Town Councillors, members of the public, suppliers, or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and Taunton Town Council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect, and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Taunton Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g., physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of Taunton Town Council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the Code of Conduct, civility and respect pledge, Equality Opportunities Policy, and all other policies and procedures set by Taunton Town Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the Grievance Procedure for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the Taunton Town Council's disciplinary procedure.

Harassment

- Where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic
- Behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic

Bullying

- Behaviour that leaves the victim feeling threatened, intimidated, humiliated, vulnerable or otherwise upset. It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic.

What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

‘Bullying’ or ‘harassment’ are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g., promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person’s appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing, or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding, or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work

- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable, and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear; however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). See Taunton Town Council's Equality Opportunities Policy.

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/ Taunton Town Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and Taunton Town Council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague):

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or, with the Town Clerk/or a Taunton Town Councillor. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a Taunton Town Councillor:

If you are being bullied or harassed by a Taunton Town Councillor, please raise this with the Town Clerk/ or the chair of Taunton Town Council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Taunton Town Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

Taunton Town Council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying:

If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to the Town Clerk or a Taunton Town Councillor. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff:

If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to Taunton Town Council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the Town Clerk, your nominated manager, or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the chair of Taunton Town Council. (If your concern relates to the chair, you should raise it with the chair of the Personnel Working Party). The chair (or another

appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of Taunton Town Council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegations or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the Taunton Town Council's Grievance Procedure. You should raise your complaint to the Town Clerk/ or the chair of the Taunton Town Council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The Town Clerk or the chair of Taunton Town Council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the Grievance Procedure. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Taunton Town Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. Taunton Town Council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the Taunton Town Councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

Taunton Town Council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand your complaint better (see the Grievance Procedure for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the Grievance Procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our Disciplinary Procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Guidance For Using The Dignity At Work Policy

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

This guidance is provided to support understanding of the policy, and its application, as well as where local adaptations may be required. The guidance is not part of the policy and should be removed from the policy adopted and shared with council employees.

The Dignity at Work Policy will replace a previous 'Bullying and Harassment' Policy, to create a policy that is focussed on encompassing behaviours beyond simply bullying and harassment, and zero tolerance with the aim of dealing with concerns before they escalate. It is important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

Wording has been suggested to demonstrate a council's commitment to promoting dignity and respect where they have signed up to the NALC, SLCC and OVW Civility and Respect Pledge. Council's that have not signed up to this are requested to consider making this pledge which is based on basic behaviours and expectations of all council representatives to create workplaces that allow people to maintain their dignity at all times. If your council has not agreed to the pledge this wording should be removed.

The policy is drafted with consideration of employment language and terminology that is reflective of a modern working environment, setting a tone that is engaging, collaborative and inclusive. A council may want to update references where relevant to reflect local terminology and structure, however, should be considerate of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The examples of bullying and harassment are just that – examples. This should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Notes:

Protected Characteristics

A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of any of the protected characteristics.

Discrimination includes treating people differently because of a protected characteristic. Employees can complain of harassment even if the behaviour in question is not directed at them. This is because the complainant does not actually need to possess the relevant protected characteristic. An employee can complain of unlawful harassment if they are related to someone with a protected characteristic, or because a colleague believes they have a protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment related to a protected characteristic could include;

- Making assumptions about someone's ability due to their **age** or denying development opportunities to someone based on their age. This could also include assumptions about their lifestyle or making inappropriate jokes related to age.
- Making fun of or mimicking impairments related to a health condition or using inappropriate language about disabilities. Constantly selecting social activities that make it impossible for a colleague with a **disability** to participate in.
- Refusing to treat a person as their new gender, or disclosing information about their gender identity could be harassment on the grounds of **gender reassignment**.
- **Pregnancy/Maternity** harassment could include refusing opportunities due to pregnancy or maternity leave, or inappropriate touching and invasion of personal space such as unwanted touching of a pregnant person's stomach.
- Harassment based on **race** could include derogatory nicknames, or stereotyping based on ethnicity. It could include racist comments or jokes, or assumptions about someone's lifestyle based on their ethnicity.
- **Gender** harassment could include not considering people for a job based on gender stereotyping roles, or implementing practices that disadvantage one gender over another. Rude, explicit jokes, even if not directed at an individual, or comments on an individual's dress or appearance.
- Regularly arranging team meals over periods of fasting or religious occasions or failing to adjust a dress code to accommodate religious dress could be examples of harassment based on **religion/belief**.
- Excluding same sex partners from social events could be both **sexual orientation** and **marriage/civil partnership** discrimination, as could not offering the same work-related benefits.

A person does not need to be employed or have 2 years qualifying service to make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

- Job applicants who believe they have not been

appointed because of a 'protected characteristic' can make a claim.

- New or established employees who are dismissed or treated unreasonably because of a health condition can make a discrimination claim.
- An employee subjected to harassment can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.
- An employee asked to retire can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal

Legal risks

Successful unfair dismissal claims are limited to a compensation cap, whereas those for unlawful discrimination have no cap. A positive employment culture, and swift action if conduct falls beneath acceptable standards will help mitigate the risks. An unhealthy culture will make it difficult to defend claims. The time to defend and the cost of defending tribunal claims can be significant, irrespective of the outcome.

Culture and behaviour

We work in eclectic communities and working environments, and a positive culture within the council enables employees with different backgrounds and beliefs to share ideas and shape how the council achieves its objectives for their community.

It is important to recognise that different individuals may find different behaviours bullying or harassing so while there is not always intent to offend or cause harm, that does not mean that the effect of the behaviour has not caused harm or offence.

It can take people a period of time to decide to raise their concerns, as they worry about consequences (perhaps from peers by complaining about a colleague who is popular, or they fear victimisation from the perpetrator or others). The council should consider whether there are opportunities (such as 121s to offer the opportunity to reflect on relationships/morale) to identify issues earlier and address negative behaviours. Individuals can often mention concerns they are experiencing but do not want to take it further. The council should remind the complainant that it has a zero tolerance to bullying and harassment and remind them of the policy in place to address concerns. If the allegations mentioned are significant, the council may want to suggest that it will need to investigate further, even if a 'grievance' is not raised, so as to ensure that any concerns and risks are managed, and the council is meeting its responsibilities and duty of care as an employer.

Whilst both staff and councillors jointly determine the working culture, councillors are key in demonstrating what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. This is apparent from how councillors behave with each other in council meetings and also in how standards of behaviour are applied through the use of informal discussion and formal policies.

Scope

All council representatives are expected to uphold the values of the Dignity at Work Policy; however, this policy sets out how allegations from employees will be managed. As indicated in the policy, concerns from a contractor, agency worker etc. should be raised to the identified person, and an appropriate approach will be considered based on the situation and relationship of the complainant with the council.

Likewise, concerns raised about the behaviour of a contractor or agency worker would not generally be managed via the full process (such as the disciplinary process), but appropriate action would be considered based on the situation. To treat people (such as contractors, or a casual worker) engaged by the council the same as an employee could blur the status of the employment relationship, so consider seeking professional advice if needed.

Managers

Recognising that councils are of varying sizes, where the term manager/nominated manager is used it is recognised this could be the clerk/chief officer, another employee of the council, or a councillor depending on the situation. It is good practice to have a clearly identified person who is the responsible 'line manager' or equivalent contact for an employee so that there is clarity on how the employee should report concerns to, who they notify if they are sick or to request leave etc. More often for council employees this may be the clerk/chief officer, and for the clerk/chief officer this could be the chair/deputy Chair, or possibly chair of a staffing/personnel committee.

Bullying and harassment & performance management

The policy sets out that bullying and harassment does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. It is not uncommon for an employee, when receiving critical feedback, to claim that this is bullying and/or harassing. It is the role of the nominated manager to provide effective and constructive feedback to encourage performance at the required standard.

Even when the feedback is not positive it should be fair, communicated in a

professional and reasonable manner and shared with the objective of aiding understanding and achieving an improvement to overcome the shortfalls. There is no absolute definition of when the feedback may not be appropriate. Often it will be for the person/panel hearing the dignity at work complaint/grievance to determine whether the performance management has upheld the standards expected in terms of respect and civility and any feedback has been shared in a fair and professional way.

Responsibilities

All staff and representatives of the council are responsible for their own behaviour in the workplace and for taking steps to revise unacceptable behaviour and appropriately challenge that of others.

Leaders – councillors, clerks, chief officers, managers - are responsible for ensuring that these standards of treating people with civility, respect and courtesy are upheld, both through their own example, and by communicating and promoting these expectations to all employees. They are also responsible for ensuring that concerns raised are treated seriously and addressed in line with this policy in a timely manner.

During the investigation

Employers have a duty of care to provide a safe place of work. If a complaint is made, discuss how to manage working relationships whilst the allegation is being investigated and until the outcome is disclosed. This is as much for the protection of the alleged perpetrator as for the aggrieved.

Consider whether a neutral person should be offered as a 'listening ear' for both parties in the investigation. This could be a councillor or nominated manager who is not involved in the investigation or allegations and can be a point of check in as raising, or being subject to allegations can be stressful.

Offer other support that may be appropriate to the situation such as signposting to support groups, time off for counselling etc. If you have suspended a staff member, your duty of care continues, and it is important to consider their wellbeing and mental health.

Ensure that you communicate regularly with both parties.

The investigation and any subsequent hearing should be completed in accordance with the grievance policy which sets out a process for dealing with concerns. You should ensure that the grievance policy adopted adheres to any local policies and procedures, with consideration of any timescales and escalation routes in your locally adopted policy.

Confidentiality

It may be possible for concerns to be raised with the perpetrator without disclosing the name of the complainant, however in a small council it is likely that it will be clear that the accused will know where the accusation has come from. The council representative (clerk/chief officer/councillor) speaking to the alleged perpetrator must be clear that the discussion is confidential, and the individual would be at risk of formal disciplinary action if there is any sort of victimisation or retaliation for the individual raising their concern.

During any formal investigation it may be necessary to disclose the nature of the allegations and where they came from to ensure a fair and balanced investigation and process. This should be discussed with the person raising the concerns to understand any issues and how they may be mitigated. In some situations, it may be appropriate to provide anonymised witness statements, however this would be a last resort and could compromise the fairness of the process. Where there is a genuine fear of consequences and this may need to be considered, it is recommended that professional advice is sought. For the same reason it can be difficult for a council to consider an anonymous complaint, however if the concerns are significant and compromise the council in their duty of care to employees, then consideration of how the deal with the matter may be required.

Victimisation

All employees have the right to raise genuine concerns without the fear of reprisals. If the aggrieved (or a witness) is treated differently / less favourably because they have raised a complaint, then this is victimisation. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint, cancelling a planned training event, or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload. Victimisation can lead to a claim to an employment tribunal.

False allegations

If an employee makes an allegation that they know to be untrue, or gives evidence that they know to be untrue, the council should consider the matter under the disciplinary procedure. Such an allegation would be potentially gross misconduct.

Complaints against Councillors

Following the Ledbury case, the law is clear that any formal complaint about a councillor regarding a breach of the code of conduct must be referred to the

Monitoring Officer for investigation (either by the complainant, or the Council with agreement of the complainant). During the investigation, it is critical to ensure that where an employee of the council has made the complaint, that the council agrees with reasonable measures with the employee to protect their health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties, change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

Careful consideration is required where a grievance is raised against the council as a whole due to lack of support related to councillor behaviours. The specific allegations will need to be considered to determine whether the allegations can be addressed by the council or require exploration of the councillors behaviour in order to respond, in which case the Monitoring Officer may be required to investigate the alleged behaviours of a/any councillors where this may relate to the code of conduct. It is a matter of fact whether the complaint is against the council and can therefore be dealt with by the council's grievance procedure or against a councillor and can only be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer.

Motion to Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency – for meeting of Taunton Town Council, 13 June 2023.

The Council notes with alarm the conclusions of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report of March 2023 (AR6 Synthesis Report Climate Change 2023) which concluded that:-

- human-caused climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying with global warming on track to reach 1.5°C above pre-industrial averages by the early 2030s;
- those most disadvantaged are being hit the hardest;
- there is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all and
- rapid and far-reaching transitions across all sectors and systems are necessary.

The Council further notes that:

- Almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species are at risk of extinction.
- Currently only 10 per cent of Somerset can be classified as being in good natural or semi-natural condition with species-rich natural habitats supporting abundant and diverse wildlife.

The Council believes that:

- (i) The ecological crisis and the climate emergency are intrinsically linked and that the impacts of the climate crisis drive nature's decline, while restoring nature can help to tackle the climate crisis.
- (ii) Action at local level can play a huge role in tackling the twin crises and we have a responsibility to provide leadership.

The Council therefore resolves to:

- a) Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency and commit to working towards Taunton becoming a carbon-neutral town where nature and biodiversity are restored and thriving by 2030.
- b) Establish a working group to develop a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan for Taunton within one year of the passing of this resolution for consideration and adoption by Full Council.
- c) Work in partnership and collaboration with climate action and environmental groups, community groups, schools, youth groups, businesses and residents as well as Somerset Council and neighbouring parishes to develop and implement the Action Plan.
- d) Review and update the Action Plan annually thereafter.
- e) Embed our commitment to climate change mitigation and nature recovery throughout all our strategies, service and policy areas, communications, community engagement work and decision-making processes.

Comeytrowe Parish Council Final Internal Audit Report Financial Year 2022-23

Internal audit carried out by:

Jill Larcombe

6 The Old School

Chapel Street

Tiverton

EX16 6ND

Tel: 01884 252647

jilllarcombe@yahoo.co.uk

Tests	Yes/No	Comment
Financial		
Did the Council meet the criteria and will it be signing the Certificate of Exemption 2022/23 to declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review?	No	Receipts are over £25,000 (£25,000 limit for exemption).
Are the accounts prepared as Receipts and payments or Income and expenditure	N/A	Receipts and Payments.
What are the Council's banking arrangements? Does it use online banking?	N/A	Online banking. Clerk sets up payments/internal transfers and they are authorised by 2 councillors. Cheques need 2 signatories. 2 signatories agreed at 6 th June meeting.
Were there Financial Regulations in place?	Yes	Comeytrowe Parish Council will become part of Taunton Town Council on 01.04.23.
Was there any petty cash? If yes, is there a procedure in place to manage it?	N/A	No petty cash. Clerk submitted expenses claims.
Accounts – arithmetic check	Yes	Checked and found to be accurate
Are payments correctly authorised in line with the Council's payment controls?	Partly	The minutes always have an item for details of receipts and payments made since the last meeting. If the Council's Financial Regulations are to be reviewed I suggest the Council considers amending Paragraph 5.2 of the Financial Regulations to cover the Council's actual practice of making payments. Most of the payments on the list that is presented at a meeting have already been made, because there has already been some form of prior authorisation. While it is good practice for the Council to review the payment schedule for compliance prior to authorising the payments that isn't what happens. (Currently paragraph 5.2 is: 'The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the

		council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised).
Are staffing costs correctly recorded for the Accounting Statement 2023?	Yes	
Are all payments (not salary) included in the minutes?	Yes	
Are all payments correctly recorded?	Yes	Cashbook checked against invoices.
Are any payments made using S137 correctly identified?	Yes	
Is income correctly recorded?	Yes	
Was the process for agreeing the budget for 2022-23 documented and was the budget approved?	Yes	Item 164 of meeting held on 06/12/21 records that the draft budget was discussed and agreed.
Was the 2022-23 precept approved and recorded in the minutes? Has the correct amount been received?	Yes	Item 164 of meeting held on 06/12/21 records that it was agreed to request a precept of £24,000. First half of precept correctly received on 20/04/22, second half received on 13/09/22.
Does the Council regularly review and monitor its spending against its budget and are monitoring reports produced?		Finance Regulations say this will be done quarterly but has not happened that frequently.
Is there evidence of regular bank reconciliations and are these checked by a councillor?	Yes	Monthly bank reconciliation prepared by the Clerk, checked by non-signatory Councillor, the same Councillor views the bank statements every month. Copies of the receipts and payments account are also sent to this Cllr with the bank reconciliation monthly. Evidence of check provided.
Does the bank reconciliation at 31 March 2023 agrees to the accounts and Box 7 of the Accounting Statement for 2022-23?	Yes	
Has VAT been correctly accounted for?	Yes	
Is the VAT return accurate and completed?	Yes	VAT repayment for April – September received on 20.10.22. VAT 126 prepared for 1 st October 2022 – 31 st March 2023 and ready to submit but waiting for bank details from Taunton Town Council.
Does the Council have adequate reserves taking into account any earmarked reserves?	N/A	Comeytrowe is now part of Taunton Town Council
Risk management		
Has the Council reviewed its internal controls?	Yes	
Did the Council have adequate insurance cover for its needs?	Yes	Policy schedule checked.

Did the Council have an Employer liability certificate?	Yes	For period 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
Was there a Risk register	Yes	
Is there evidence of Exercise of Public Rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations?	Yes	2021-22 audit The Notice of Public Rights was published on the website but the date of the announcement, 13 th June 2022, was the same date as the commencement of the Inspection period. It should not be less than one day before the commencement. Correct number of days given for the inspection period (13 th June to 22 nd July).
Staffing		
Did the Clerk and any other Council employee have a Contract of employment in place?	Yes	The Council only had one employee – the Clerk/RFO.
Were payroll procedures carried out correctly and PAYE and NI correctly accounted for?	Yes	HMRC payroll system operated and PAYE and NI requirements have been properly applied. RTI submitted monthly, on time.
Did the Clerk receive a Year end P60?	N/A	P45 received as employment ceased at year end
Did the Clerk receive any training in year?	Yes	Election training (paid for by BHPC)
Did the Council have an Absence and Sickness Policy and if not, are arrangements included in Contracts of Employment?	No	Included in Contract of Employment
Did the Council have an Annual Leave Policy and if not, are arrangements included in a Contract of Employment?	No	Included in Contract of Employment
Did the Council have a Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and if not, are arrangements included in a Contract of Employment?	Yes	Reviewed 08/02/22
Was the Council's Code of Conduct in place and up to date?	Yes	LGA Model Code of Conduct adopted 09.05.22
Other matters		
Did the Council take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes	Internal Audit Report reported 06.06.22 - no matters of non-compliance.
Did the Council reviewed the of Effectiveness of Internal Audit?	Yes	
The Council has complied with the publication requirements for the 2021/22 AGAR	Yes	Comeytrowe Parish Council complied with the publication requirements. Taunton Town Council's decision to completely remove the Comeytrowe Parish Council website and the information on it means that the publication requirements are no longer being met. This information is not available through the Taunton Town Council website.

I have carried out the interim internal audit for the period 01.04.22 – 31.03.23 in accordance with what I have considered to be this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the

areas examined above there were no matters of non-compliance from Comeytrowe Parish Council for this period.

Publication requirement for the 2021/22 AGAR were met by Comeytrowe Parish Council. As a result of a decision by Taunton Town Council to remove public access to the Comeytrowe Parish Council website shortly after Comeytrowe became part of Taunton Town Council on 1st April 2023 these requirements are no longer being met.

Signed *Jee Larcambe*

Date 14th April 2023

Documentation requested and inspected

Cash book – spreadsheet to 31.03.23 emailed

Copies of invoices checked

Bank statements – pdf copies

Bank reconciliations

VAT Return preparation – spreadsheet details only

Asset Register

Current Risk Assessment –

Financial Risk Assessment/Statement of Internal Control

Insurance Policy Schedule

Minutes – viewed on the Council's website when it was live. I am surprised that these are no longer publicly available on the Taunton Town Council website

Current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct – viewed on website

Staplegrave Parish Council Internal Audit Report Financial Year 2022-23

Internal audit carried out by:

Jill Larcombe

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Chapel Street

Tiverton

EX16 6ND

Tel: 01884 252647

jilllarcombe@yahoo.co.uk

Date of audit: 11th April 2023

Tests	Yes/No	Comment
Financial		
Does the Council meet the criteria for the Certificate of Exemption 2022/23 to be signed to declare the Council exempt from a limited assurance review?	No	Payments were more than £25,000. No exemption for 2022/23.
Are the accounts prepared as Receipts and payments or Income and expenditure	Noted	Receipts and payments.
Does the Council have a Statement of internal control?	Yes	Not reviewed in 2022-23
Has the Council reviewed the of Effectiveness of Internal Audit?	No	
What are the Council's banking arrangements? Does it use online banking?	Noted	Cheques require 2 signatures. No online banking. A signatory is authorised to make a written request on headed paper transfer money from the Santander deposit account to the NatWest current account.
Are there Financial Regulations in place and have they been reviewed recently?	Yes	Reviewed and amended 23.03.22
Is there any petty cash? If yes, is there a procedure in place to manage it?	No	No petty cash used. Clerk claims expenses monthly.
Accounts – arithmetic check	Yes	Check carried out
Are payments correctly authorised in line with the Council's payment controls?	Yes	
Are staffing costs correctly recorded for the Accounting Statement?	Yes	Correctly recorded
Are all payments included in the minutes?	Yes	All invoice payments shown
Are all payments correctly recorded?	Yes	All payments correctly recorded on spreadsheet.
Are any payments made using S137 correctly identified?	Mostly	The payment for the regilding of the clock could have been made using the Parish Councils Act 1957 s2

Is income correctly recorded?	Yes	Remittances checked against spreadsheet and bank statements
Was the process for agreeing the budget for 2022-23 documented and was the budget approved?	Yes	
Was the 2022-23 precept approved and recorded in the minutes?	Yes	
Does the Council regularly review and monitor its spending against its budget and are monitoring reports produced?	Yes	Report produced for each meeting and discussed by councillors.
Is there evidence of regular bank reconciliations and are these checked by a councillor?	Yes	Bank reconciliations are produced which are checked and signed by a councillor who is not the chair. This is reported at a Parish Council meeting.
Does the bank balance at 31 March 2023 agree to the accounts and Box 7 of the Accounting Statement for 2022-23?	Yes	Bank balance agrees to accounts and Box 7 of the Accounting Statement for 2022-23.
Has VAT been correctly accounted for?	Yes	Checked against spreadsheet
Is the VAT return accurate and completed?	Yes	
Does the Council have adequate reserves taking into account any earmarked reserves?	N/A	The Council was abolished on 01.04.23
Did the Council have a General Reserves Policy? Has it reviewed the level and purpose of its earmarked reserves?	No	No policy Reserves reviewed before Council abolished.
Risk management		
Did the Council have adequate insurance cover for its needs?	Yes	Insurance provided through Arthur J Gallagher to cover the period 1 st June 2023 and 31 st May 2023.
Did the Council have adequate Employer liability and a certificate?	Yes	
Was there a Risk register in place, was it up to date	Yes	
Transparency Code (Information on website)		
Agendas – are they published on the website? Are agenda items clear on the decisions councillors need to make?	Yes	Agendas were published on website and it was clear what decisions need to be made. Since the Parish Council was abolished this information is no longer viewable.
Minutes – are they published on the website (requirement is within 30 days of the meeting)? Are they adequately numbered, are decisions clear and do they include the payments that have been approved?	Yes	Minutes for each meeting were published on the website. No check to see if they are published within 30 days. Pages numbered for each meeting. Decisions clear.
Is the Annual Governance Statement 2021-22 published on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been

		closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Is the Accounting Statement 2021-22 on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Is the Internal audit report 2021-22 published on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Are payments over £100 in 2021-22 on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Are details of public land and building assets on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Is the bank reconciliation at 31.03.22 on the website?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Is there evidence of Exercise of Public Rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations?	No longer	This information was published on the Staplegrove Parish Council website but the website has been closed as Staplegrove is now part of Taunton Town Council
Staffing		
Did the Clerk and any other Council employee have a Contract of employment in place?	Yes	Clerk has a contract of employment – issued 27 th August 2019
Are payroll procedures carried out correctly and PAYE and NI correctly accounted for?	Yes	
Has the Clerk received a Year end P60?	N/A	P45 as a result of redundancy
Did the Council have an Absence and Sickness Policy and if not, are arrangements included in Contracts of Employment?	Yes C o E	No policy. Only one employee and arrangements covered in Contract of Employment.
Did the Council have an Annual Leave Policy and if not, are arrangements included in a Contract of Employment?	Yes C o E	No policy. Only one employee and arrangements covered in Contract of Employment.
Did the Council have a Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and if not, are arrangements included in a Contract of Employment?	Yes C o E	No policy. No compliance issue as only one employee and arrangements covered in Contract of Employment.
Members		

Was the Council's Code of Conduct in place and up to date?	Yes	LGA Code of Conduct adopted 13/07/22
Other policies and procedures (are they in place and up to date?)		
Standing Orders	Yes	Adopted 16.09.21
Anti-fraud and Corruption	No	
Data Protection	No	Recommended
Privacy Statement/s	Yes	Privacy statement on website
Awarding of Grants	No	Recommended, not statutory
Freedom of information Requests	Yes	Adopted 18 th March 2021
Equality	Yes	Adopted August 2009
Complaints	Yes	Not known when adopted
Information Publication Scheme	Yes	2020 version on website
Other matters		
Did the Council take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes	The points raised in the 2022 Internal Audit Report have been discussed at Parish Council meetings and actions have been taken.

I have carried out the interim internal audit for the period 01.04.22 – 31.03.23 in accordance with what I have considered to be this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined above there were no matters of non-compliance from Staplegrove Parish Council for this period.

Publication requirement for the 2021/22 AGAR were met by Staplegrove Parish Council. As a result of a decision by Taunton Town Council to remove public access to the Comeytrowe Parish Council website shortly after Comeytrowe became part of Taunton Town Council on 1st April 2023 these requirements are no longer being met.

Jill Larcombe

Jill Larcombe

6th May 2022

Documentation requested and inspected

Cash book

Copies of invoices and remittances

Bank statements

Bank reconciliations and proof of councillor checks

Budget preparation documents

Budget monitoring reports

VAT Return

Asset Register

Current Risk Assessment

Cheque books

Employers Liability Certificate

Minutes

Policies

Current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

Payslips

AGAR Accounting Statement 2021-22

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Comeytrove 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 2023, 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
			✓

***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:

13/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.taunton-tc.gov.uk **ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Staplegrave 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 2023, 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:

13/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.taunton-tc.gov.uk

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

The Charter Trustees for Taunton

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 2023, 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:

13/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

<https://tinyurl.co/TauntonTrustees>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Comeytrove Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	38,809	36,508	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	24,000	24,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	3,087	3,705	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	16,950	18,002	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	12,438	28,724	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	36,508	17,487	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	36,508	17,487	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	97,025	102,352	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 do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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

12/06/2023

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

13/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Staplegrave Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	17,105	16,426	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	12,934	12,910	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,310	2,051	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	4,361	5,843	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	11,562	20,876	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	16,426	4,668	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	16,426	4,668	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	24,314	23,314	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 do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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

12/06/2023

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

13/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

The Charter Trustees for Taunton

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	8,676	4,686	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	52,819	58,722	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	0	0	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	0	0	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	56,809	60,711	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	4,686	2,697	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	4,686	2,697	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	142,958	257,290	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 do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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

30/05/2023

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

13/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Agenda item 15

TO BE SUBMITTED TO PKF WITH THE ANNUAL RETURN AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

NAME OF SMALLER AUTHORITY:	Taunton Town Council
DATE INSPECTION PERIOD COMMENCED:	19 June 2023
DATE INSPECTION PERIOD ENDS:	28 July 2023

Please note this information must be provided to the auditor in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

IMPORTANT TIPS

DOs

- The inspection period must be for a period of 30 (thirty) working days.
- It must include the first 10 working days of July (3 - 14 July 2023).
- The earliest the inspection period can commence is Monday 5 June ending on Friday 14 July 2023
- The latest the inspection period can commence is Monday 3 July ending on Friday 11 August 2023
- The inspection period must start the day at least the day after the notice, approved section 1 and approved section 2 are published on your website (parish meetings must publish it somewhere conspicuous).

DONTs

- The inspection period should not be commencing before the annual governance statement and accounting statements are approved
- The inspection period should not be commencing on a date on or after 4 July 2023

Updated Logo

Version 1

1/4



Updated Logo

Version 2



TAUNTON
TOWN COUNCIL

2/4



TAUNTON
TOWN COUNCIL

Previous Logos

Smaller variations not included



Original

2



3



4

5



6



Previous Logos

Smaller variations not included

4/4



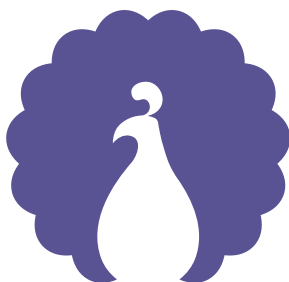
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8



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11



12