Highley Parish Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

	Notes
1. The audit of accounts for **Highley Parish Council** for the year ended 31 March 2026 has been completed and the accounts have been published.	This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. **This must include publication on the smaller authority's website.** The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years.
2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of **Highley Parish Council** on application to:	
(a) THE CLERK / RFO Alison Palmer C/O THE SEVERN CENTRE HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL	(a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR
(b) TUE/WED/THU 10am - 2pm	(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised
3. Copies will be provided to any local government elector of the area on payment of £12 (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.	(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs
Announcement made by: (d) A PALMER	(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice
Date of announcement: (e) 3/9/26.	(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

Highley 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 2026, that:

	Agreed Yes	Agreed No*		'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✔			prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✔			made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We have assured 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.	✔			has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✔			during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✔			considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✔			arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✔			responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✔			disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. **(For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.**	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
			✔	
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✔			has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.

***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:

28/4/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

P&R APRIL 9

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

Chair [signature]

Clerk [signature]

www.highleyparish.gov.uk

20 May 2026

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Highley Parish Council – SH0082**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

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

- Section 2, Box 9 for the prior year and current year are incorrect due to a typographical error and should read £78,999 and £72,999 respectively
- Section 2, Box 6 incorrectly includes items which are staff costs as defined in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide. Please note that Box 4 should comprise payments made in relation to the employment of staff including only gross salary, employers' national insurance contributions, employers' pension contributions, gratuities for employees or former employees and severance or terminations payments to employees. Employment expenses which are benefits (mileage, travel, etc.), items of reimbursement of expenses for postage, stationery or other outlays made on behalf of the smaller authority, home working allowance, payroll processing costs and contractor/locum clerk costs in respect of individuals who are self-employed, are not staff costs for the purpose of completion of the AGAR in accordance with proper practice. Please restate Boxes 4 and 6 in next year's prior year comparatives.

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

None

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature: PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date: 30/08/2026

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

Highley Parish Council

	Year ending 31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	Notes and guidance Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
1. Balances brought forward	140,627	163,947	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	144,107	149,870	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	26,206	24,083	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	41,008	45,378	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	105,985	130,063	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	163,947	162,459	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	163,947	162,459	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	0	0	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	
11. Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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]

Date 28/4/2026

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

28/4/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

RHRAPRIL10

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

[signature]