

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

Notice of Conclusion of Audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023

In accordance with

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

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

	Notes
1. The audit of accounts for New Milton Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 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 is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of New Milton Town Council on application to:	
(a) Graham Flexman Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer New Milton Town Council Town Hall 2 Ashley Road New Milton Hants BH25 6AS	(a) Insert the names, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR.
(b) Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm	(b) Insert the hours during which the inspection rights may be exercised.
3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of...	(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs.
(c) £5.00 for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.	
(d) Announcement made by: Graham Flexman, Town Clerk & RFO	(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice.
(e) Date of announcement: 26 September 2023	(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice.



Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23



We acknowledge as the members of:

NEW MILTON TOWN 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' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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 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.	✓		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.

*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:

26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

28 a)

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

Chairman

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

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NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	622,434	628,111	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	1,130,212	1,186,500	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	203,501	531,054	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	-561,400	-578,217	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	-766,636	-1,016,591	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	628,111	750,857	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	666,055	810,392	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	5,491,808	5,785,492	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



Date

26/06/2023

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

26/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

28 b)

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



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **New Milton Town Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; 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 2022/23

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

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

None

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

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 2023.

External Auditor Name

BDO LLP Southampton EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

DocuSigned by:
BDO LLP
28EB056D80974E4

Date

25 September 2023

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-24

Month & Year	Town Council	Amenities Committee	F & GP Committee	Planning Committee
	Monday	Monday	Monday	Alternate Thursdays
May 2023	15 Annual Meeting	30 (Tues)	-	25
June 2023	26	-	12	8 & 22
July 2023 10 Indian Obelisk	-	11 (Tues)	24	4 (Tues) & 20
August 2023 23 WWII - Clock	7	-	-	3, 17 & 31
September 2023	-	4	18	14 & 28
October 2023 23 Annual Allots	2	16	30	12 & 26
November 2023 13 Remembrance	13	27	-	9 & 23
December 2023 2 Carol Service	-	-	12 (Tues)	5 (Tues) & 21
January 2024	2 (Tues)	15	29	4 & 18
February 2024	12	27 (Tues)	-	1, 15 & 29 (Leap Year)
March 2024	25	-	11	14 & 28
April 2024 29 Annual Towns	-	9 (Tues)	22	11 & 25
May 2024	14 (Tues) Annual Meeting	28 (Tues)	-	7 (Tues) & 23

**All meetings are normally held at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, 2 Ashley Road, BH25 6AS
Members of the Public are welcome to attend any meeting and may speak as follows:**

- a) If time permits, Town Council meetings will be adjourned at the end for a '**DEMOCRATIC HALF HOUR**' during which members of the Public, with the approval of the Chairman, may initiate discussion on matters of community interest and which fall within the responsibility of the Town Council.
- b) Prior to the commencement of other meetings, and at the discretion of the Chairman, a short period of Public Participation may take place. Members of the public may speak on any item(s) appearing on the public agenda, or on any other matter that falls within the Committee's terms of reference.

Annual Town's Meeting is a public meeting normally required by statute to be held in the period between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) each year. **Note: It is not a Town Council meeting.**
Annual Meeting of the Council - In a year of ordinary elections of parish councillors, the annual meeting shall be held within 14 days of the councillors elected at that election taking office.

Town Development Manager Report For Town Council Meeting 2nd October 2023

1. *Street Trading*

The Town Council are looking at ways to address the issues that many towns are currently facing with Street Trading. In doing so, the Street Trading Working Party firstly want to survey local residents and business owners as to what they would like to see from the market, if they feel it is beneficial to the town. Over the past few weeks I have personally spent time with our stall holders to discuss the thoughts and views of the market. A short survey has been compiled for both residents and business owners to share their views, to be reviewed in the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting.

2. *New Milton Train Station Proposed Ticket Office Closure*

New Milton Town Council is supporting local residents in their voice against the proposed closure of the train station ticket office. A number of residents have approached NMTC to ask for its support in writing to South Western Railway to put forward strong opposition against any planned closure, including evidential reasons on the impact this may have on residents and those who rely on railway staff being on hand to help South Western Railway customers. Citizens Advice have joined in its support and our Town Clerk has personally written to SWR with supporting correspondence.

3. *Review of Neighbourhood Plan*

New Milton's Neighbourhood Plan is due a review. Commonly every five years it is beneficial to review established NPs to include evolving policies and movement relevant to further improving the town vision, in some cases a review may be required sooner or later depending on circumstances. A NP working party has been established and consideration taken into the importance of how we can best protect any historical relevance of our town. The first NP review meeting will be held on the 31st October, to include New Milton Heritage Society's historian, Nick Saunders and New Milton Residents Association Chair Sue Larkin and Vice Chair Julia Stamper.

4. *New Forest District Council Community Forum*

New Forest District Council will be establishing a new Community Forum later this year. Cllr Dan Poole would like to bring together the District, Town and Parish Councils with local statutory bodies and voluntary groups, to ensure a joined-up approach to the work that is ongoing within the District. NFDC are proud to note the remarkable success of New Milton's Socially Prescribed Low Carb Cookery Classes, held in conjunction with Coastal Medical Partnership and have asked me to join the first Community Forum on 18th October 2023, to talk on the benefits and positive impact the classes have on the town, along with the support shown by New Milton Town Council in ensuring the classes remain a staple to New Milton.