

## Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of **Harwell Parish Council**

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

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

### 2 External auditor report 2020/21

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

Section 14(1) of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 requires the period of public rights should be a 'single period of 30 working days'. The Council provided a period of 31 working days in 2019-20 for the review of their records. Whilst we consider providing a longer period than legally required to be a trivial breach of the regulations, this was pointed out by the internal auditor and a 'No' assertion correctly provided in Section 1 in relation to this element on the 2020-21 Return. However, on review the public rights period provided for the 2020-21 Return is also 31 working days and therefore the reported findings have not been appropriately actioned. We would anticipate this being taken into account when completing Section 1, Assertions 4 and 7 of your 2021/22 Return.

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

**None**

### 3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify/ do not certify\* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moore".

Date

08/09/2021