



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. C. Crane

Notice of Meeting to Members of the Public and Press

Members of the public are cordially invited to attend a meeting of Redenhall with Harleston Town Council which will be held in the Social Room, Memorial Hall Leisure Centre, Harleston on Wednesday 29th May 2024 at 7.00pm to consider the business detailed below.

Signed: Clare Crane – Town Clerk

Date: 22nd May 2024

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

SELFLESSNESS, INTEGRITY, OBJECTIVITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, OPENNESS, HONESTY & LEADERSHIP

AGENDA

1. To elect
 - a) a Chairman
 - b) a Vice-Chairman
 - c) To agree to provide a report at the Annual Town Meeting 2025
2. To receive the Chairman and Vice Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
3. Welcome
4. To receive and consider accepting apologies from members unable to attend.
5. To note Cllr Attwood's resignation, received on Friday, May 10th, 2024.
6. To receive and note any declarations of members' pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary/other interests pertaining to items on the following agenda, to note any dispensations granted in respect of business to be discussed and to consider any requests for dispensations.¹
7. To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting on Wednesday 24th April 2024 (copy herewith)
8. To note progress on decisions made at the last meetings of Council (copy herewith)
9. To consider a resolution under Standing Orders 3e to suspend the meeting to receive reports from County and District Councillors, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda (the period of designated time for public participation is 20 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting and individual members of the public are entitled to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each).²
10. To resolve that from 29th May 2024 this council continues to meet the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, for Redenhall with Harleston Town Council to adopt the General Power of Competence³

¹ All details to be found at <https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/your-town-council/become-a-councillor/>

² All details to be found at <https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/your-town-council/become-a-councillor/>

³ All details to be found at <https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Guidance/good-councillors-guide-2018.pdf>

- 11. Resolution to appoint members onto Committees.**
(Terms of Reference to be agreed at the first committee meeting)
 - a) Footpath & Tree Warden – Operations Manager
 - b) Amenities
 - c) Leisure Centre Management
 - d) Planning & Development
 - e) Finance
- 12. To agree on working parties and their lead Town Councillors for**
 - a) Maintenance of Planters in the Town
 - b) Nature Recovery
 - c) Budget Setting
 - d) Christmas Lights
- 13. To agree on the representative for the Town Council for**
 - a) Kindness Help Hub
 - b) Footpath and Tree Warden (Operations Manager)
 - c) Harleston and District Business Forum
 - d) Exchange 2
 - e) Harleston Information Plus
 - f) Harleston's Future
- 14. To agree the continuation of the Town Councillor leading each agreed council priority until 2027**
 - a) Leisure Centre Building Improvement Project - feasibility study project
 - b) S106 & CIL Policies
 - c) Legal Obligation
 - d) Emergency/Flooding Plan
 - e) Review of the Neighbourhood Plan
 - f) Councillor Surgeries
 - g) Review of Signage in Town
- 15. To receive and note the contents of month 1 Income and Expenditure report and formulate and agree any questions for the Finance Committee. (Copy herewith)**
- 16. To receive and note the contents of month 1 Bank Reconciliation and formulate and agree any questions for the Finance Committee (Copy herewith)**
- 17. Receive and note the contents of the Payments Lists provided.**
 - a. 23rd April 2024 (Copy herewith)
 - b. 15th May 2024 (Copy herewith)
- 18. To receive and review the Internal Auditors Report (Mr T Brown) for year ending 2023/24 and formulate and agree any recommendations (copy herewith)**
- 19. Presentation of the 2023/2024 End of Year Finance report**
 - a) To receive and note the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24 Form 3 (copy herewith – whole document)
 - b) To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report (AGAR) completed by Mr T Brown for 2023/24 (copy herewith – Signed version)
 - c) To complete the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 Section 1 and approve. Both the Chairman and the Clerk to sign the hard copy
 - d) To receive the Accounting Statements 2023/24 Section 2 and approve. Both the Chairman and the RFO to sign the hard copy.
- 20. To review the following recommended costs presented by the Leisure Centre and the Finance Committee:**
 - a. To ratify the payment of £7000.00 to Norfolk County Council (Parish Partnership Funding Bid) From EMR348 Community Fund in line with FR 4.3

- 21.** To receive and agree the following as recommended by the Executive Committee
 - a. Biodiversity Policy
 - b. Menopause Policy
- 22.** To receive an update from the steering group on the feasibility and design study to understand the options available to deliver a new community building on the Wilderness Lane site (copy herewith)
- 23.** To receive Committee updates and report on any significant issues arising⁴:
 - a. Planning Meeting - Last held on April 29 and 13th May 2024
 - b. Amenities Meeting – Last held on the 1st May 2024
 - c. Executive Meeting – Last held of the 8th May 2024
 - d. Finance Committee – Last held on 15th May 2024
- 24.** To consider information or issues relevant to Council from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on a future agenda and receive reports for information only.
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Vice Chairman – Heritage Open Day
 - c. Councillors (Cllr West to provide update on grant funding)
 - d. Town Clerk
- 25.** To note the date of the next Town Council meeting on Wednesday 26th June 2024, 7.00pm start in the Social Room at the Memorial Leisure Centre.

⁴ All details to be found at <https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/town-council-minutes/>



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. C. Crane

Chairman: Paul MBA

Minutes of a meeting of Redenhall with Harleston Town Council held in the Social Room at the Memorial Leisure Centre on Wednesday 24th April 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors:- Paul MBA (Chairman), Matt Scade (Vice Chair), Eloise Wilkinson, Keith Harrison, Lucy Chenery, Shelagh West. Clive Attwood, John Graham, Michael Hardy

Also, present: Clare Crane (Town Clerk), Emma Chandler (Deputy Clerk)

Members of the Public: County Councillor Martin Wilby, District Councillor Trevor Graham

1. Welcome

Cllr Mba welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. To receive and consider accepting apologies from members unable to attend.

Apologies received from Cllr Brownsea due to a prior engagement.

Unanimously accepted.

Noted that apologies were also received from District Councillor Eddy due to work commitments.

3. To receive and note any declarations of members' pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary/other interests pertaining to items on the following agenda, to note any dispensations granted in respect of business to be discussed and to consider any requests for dispensations.

None declared.

4. To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting on Wednesday 27th March 2024

Unanimously agreed.

Cllr MBA signed and dated the minutes.

5. To note progress on decisions made at the last meetings of Council.

Clerk confirmed that the policies were now available on the website.

The remainder of the report was noted.

6. To consider a resolution under Standing Orders 3e to suspend the meeting to receive reports from County and District Councillors, and to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda (the period of designated time for public participation is 20 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting and individual members of the public are entitled to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each).

County Councillor Wilby provided a report available at appendix A.

District Councillor Graham provided a report available at appendix B.

District Councillor Eddy had also provided a report prior to the meeting which can be found at appendix C.

Cllr Mba raised a concern with the District Council regarding the presence of Traffic Enforcement Officers in Harleston. In response, District Councillor Graham committed to investigate whether a report could be sent from SNC to the Town Council, including dates of visits and tickets issued by Traffic Enforcement Officers. Additionally, he pledged to explore the feasibility of the Town Council funding supplementary attendance, as proposed by the County Councillor.

Action – District Councillor Graham

- 7. To receive and note the contents of month 12 Income and Expenditure report and formulate and agree any questions for the Finance Committee.**

Noted

- 8. To receive and note the contents of month 12 Bank Reconciliation and formulate and agree any questions for the Finance Committee**

Noted

- 9. Receive and note the contents of the Payments Lists provided.**

- a. 28th March 2024**

Noted

- 10. To review the following recommended costs presented by the Leisure Centre and the Finance Committee:**

- a. Tiger Mulch under the Zip Wire Area: £8,031.16 net**
- b. Roundabout: £13,324.00 net**
- c. To consider and approve utilization of S106 (£10,502.13) funds exclusively for Recreational space, with a deadline of 14/04/2025.**

Unanimously agreed to use the S106 for the Tiger Mulch under the Zip wire.

Action – Town Clerk/Operations Manager

- d. To consider and approve the utilization of EMR 326 for the outstanding amount of £10,852.00 (£18,616.50 currently in the EMR, leaving £7,764.50 remaining).**

Unanimously agreed to defer the roundabout for a month in order that grant funding can be investigated fully for this item.

Action – Town Clerk/Cllr West

- 11. To receive the Market Town Network Improvement Strategies Briefing Report and deliberate on whether the Town Council is inclined to pursue the Market Town Network Improvement Strategy. Specifically, to discuss advocating for Norfolk County Council (NCC) to prioritize Harleston for an associated study.**

The Clerk gave an update on how the item has come to the agenda.

Unanimously agreed for the Clerk to write NCC to advocate the study.

Action – Town Clerk

- 12. To agree for Councillor Wilkinson to organise an informal meeting inviting residents of Harleston involved in or interested in supporting nature recovery and future biodiversity for the town. The purpose is to gauge interest, enthusiasm, and availability to implement ideas or offer supporting knowledge.**

Unanimously agreed.

Action – Cllr Wilkinson

13. To discuss and determine the Town Council's involvement in Harleston's Heritage Open Days coordinated by the Historical Society

Cllr Mba provided some background on the initiative.

a. Pending the prior item's outcome, nominate a councillor to lead the council's involvement.

Unanimously agreed to support the initiative and for the Clerk to contact the Historical Society to confirm that Cllr Scade will be the contact for the council and that the council are committed to providing assistance in any way possible.

Action – Town Clerk

14. To receive an update from the steering group on the feasibility and design study to understand the options available to deliver a new community building on the Wilderness Lane site.

The Clerk gave an overview of the information available in the meeting pack. All updates would be provided on the Town Council website.

15. To receive Committee updates and report on any significant issues arising

a. Planning Meeting - Last held on April 8, 2024 (including updates on committee structure)

Cllr Graham confirmed that he was now chair of the committee with Cllr West taking the responsibility of Vice Chair. The committee are now awaiting the outcome of the planning application for the land south of Spirketts Lane.

b. Leisure Centre management Meeting – Last held on 10th April 2024

Leisure Centre team were commended on the financial results for 2023/24.

Harleston Shed were requested to provide templates of leases used by other Shed organisations.

c. Finance Committee – Last held on 17th April 2024

Month 12 scrutinised line by line.

The Chair attended the council offices to sign off the end of year earlier in the week.

16. To note Cllr Harrison's resignation from the Planning and Development Committee.

Noted

17. To consider information or issues relevant to Council from members for brief discussion, action, or inclusion on a future agenda and receive reports for information only.

a. Chairman

Cllr Mba informed about the Councillor surgery the previous Saturday with four people attending talking about parking and planning applications. All questions and answers will be available on the website.

Cllr Mba has been involved with the Feasibility Study meeting and is very happy with the company chosen to complete the study.

b. Councillors

Cllr Wilkinson commented about the Town Guide and how good it looks.

Cllr Graham confirmed that he has been liaising with a member of the public who has completed a comprehensive breakdown of the signage in the town.

Cllr Hardy thought the new banking hub was a good idea. He also confirmed there is lots of movement in the town at present with new shops opening and planning applications submitted for change of use.

c. Town Clerk (to include matters on the Town Improvement Scheme).

The Town Council have now been advised that the flow plate will be removed in the Town Car Park.

The Clerk will now be pursuing the necessity for an amendment to the traffic restrictions on parts of London Road.

Cllr Hardy questioned the possible TRO that will be in place that will close Exchange Street on Saturdays and the impact of losing a disabled parking place.

18. To note the resignation of Terry Pegg as secretary of the Royal British Legion Harleston & District Branch and the appointment of Rosie Riches as his replacement.

Noted

The Town Council expressed gratitude for Mr. Pegg's years of dedicated service to both the Harleston Branch of the RBL and the community. The Clerk was requested to note the resignation and publicly thank Mr Pegg in the Grapevine.

Action - Town Clerk

19. To receive, review, and acknowledge correspondence from Harleston Information Plus (HIP), and to determine if any additional actions are necessary.

Noted

20. To note the date of the next Town Council meeting on Wednesday 22nd May 2024, 7.00pm start in the Social Room at the Memorial Leisure Centre.

Noted

Meeting Closed at 20.35

Signed

Dated

Appendix A

County Councillor Report

April 2024

A Big Congratulations to Mrs Annie Chapman who has been made a honorary fellow of Cancer Research UK at the National Flame of Hope awards. This award recognises the amazing Annie and all of her helpers and supporters that have raised over £1m since starting the Pink Tractor Ladies Run. We all look forward to seeing the colourfully decorated tractors and their drivers back on the road this year on Sunday 7th July.

Work is now underway across Norfolk on the annual spring and summer surface dressing project. The work is carried out between April and September every year while the weather is warmer. This year 280 miles of Norfolk's roads will get a new seal to help prevent potholes opening up, extend the life of the road and provide a new skid resistant surface to reduce the risk of accidents. The team aims to get the holiday areas and main roads treated first so they are complete before the start of the summer season. The first work as part of this year's programme started at the beginning of April and will cost £11.785m and represents an investment in maintaining Norfolk' roads. People are urged to drive slowly and considerably across the new surface until it is bedded in and Highway Teams return to sweep up the loose chippings.

Key functions and employees of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) transferred to Norfolk and Suffolk on April 1st 2024 as part of the government's devolution process. LEP functions include business representation, strategic economic planning and responsibility for the delivery of government programmes. Business support will continue to be provided by New Anglia Growth Hub – which delivers the LEP's business growth programme, including the administration of grant schemes. The Growth Hub has supported businesses and the region's economy, with the economic impact of it's business growth programme measured over a 10 year period at £1,032,797,741 creating new jobs and safeguarding existing employment.

The Local Government Association have recently published a report, Getting Under the Bonnet, highlighting how councils are working with the NHS to deliver health checks for their communities. Norfolk County Council is cited as a good practice case study as it has progressed to being one of the best in England in terms of the percentage of the eligible population receiving a Health Check. The success of the NHS Health Checks improvement programme is down to a structured review approach, the hard work of the NHS Health Check improvement group and the relationships that have been built up with Primary Care and Providers. Information about eligibility and how to get a free health check is available on NCC's website.

Best Wishes

Martin

Appendix B

District Councillor Report

April 2024

South Norfolk Council took their support for community focused nature recovery to another level with the start of a social media campaign titled 'Give a helping hand to nature' which will be followed by a press release in the EDP. I am working with an Environmental Officer who is the District Council representative on some task and finish groups of the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy Partnership. We have a slot together on the Town and Parish Forum meeting in May to explain and promote the concept of community involvement.

I note an agenda item this evening relating to nature recovery, and hope that the Town Council can retain their pre-eminence on this important topic and continue to support the 'Nature Recovery in Harleston' community and the emerging plans of South Norfolk Council.

It was wonderful to see a vibrant Market Place and town centre for the Spring Fair arranged by Harleston's Future. I enjoyed both the Easter town trails but decided that I was too mature to submit my answers. This month, I attended a meeting involving over 20 local groups to discuss an idea conceived by the Historical Society for a wider community contribution to the national Heritage Open Days. It was pleasing to see the concept of Team Harleston alive and thriving in our community. I look forwards to a coordinated programme which puts Harleston on the national stage. I also attended the Business Forum Breakfast meeting and heard a presentation from Matt Scade on the work of Foodbank and the harrowing stories of how more and more people are becoming reliant on this exceptional service. I offer my wholehearted appreciation to everyone involved in Foodbank.

It is good to see the release of the latest edition of the Town Guide. Sadly, my foreword along those of previous Chairs of the Council, is now consigned to history. Cllr Mba provides the latest friendly introduction to Harleston. I particularly welcome the prominent link to the 'Visit Harleston' website which will hopefully generate more traffic and subsequent visitors. The 'Visit' website is another example of how Harleston is at the forefront of delivering South Norfolk initiatives.

Unfortunately, there have been reported instances of vehicle related anti-social behaviour, noise, fireworks and flares coming from a car meeting which took place in Harleston. South Norfolk Council Officers are working with the Police to enforce the Public Spaces Protection Order.

Back to good news, South Norfolk Council have awarded a 'Pride in Place' grant to Harleston Information Plus for the delivery of 1-1 support and training to complement existing weekly Jobs Club sessions. They awarded other grants to groups covering the entire district: the Mason Trust - Step Forward Project to support people who are currently out of work, education or looking to upskill; the Matthew Project to support NEET individuals through a programme which addresses a variety of employability and personal skills over a long term period; MTM Youth Services to provide accredited training courses in either Food Hygiene or First Aid to young people in order to increase their employability when applying for opportunities; and Cup-O-T Peer Worker Training to support those with mental health issues, or care responsibilities for those with mental health issues, through a certified program to become trained as a Peer Worker in other voluntary and NHS organisations.

I continue to hold a regular surgery, the next one is on Saturday 11 May at Harleston Information Plus on Exchange Street in Harleston between 10:00 and 11:00. I hope to see you then.

Cllr Trevor Graham

South Norfolk Council

Member for Harleston

DRAFT

Appendix C

District Councillor Report

April 2024

It's fair to say that I had little idea of what to expect when I was elected to be a district councillor. I certainly had little idea that in less than a year I would have gained relatively wide-ranging knowledge on issues like flooding and the effects of hearing impairment upon individuals locally and across the country.

Perhaps most surprising to me has been the work involved in looking into the upkeep of our graveyards. Specifically, this has been in relation to the graveyard at Redenhall Church. While I had known that the responsibility for the older part of the graveyard lay with South Norfolk Council, I wasn't aware of just how inconsistent the upkeep of the graveyard and the graves has been in recent years.

Of course, I'm not looking to blame anyone for this. While anyone who has relatives in the graveyard can tell you that maintaining the graveyard is an important job, it is also one that will tend to fall down the pecking order when finances in local government are as tight as they have been in recent years. That isn't to suggest that there is no money but whatever money there is will certainly need to be spread rather thinly.

Perhaps inevitably then, the task of maintaining such a key part of our local collective and individual history is likely to increasingly fall to local volunteers (in partnership with South Norfolk Council). As such, I am reaching out to people who feel strongly about the need to look after Redenhall Graveyard, and who feel they can offer time and/or expertise to help. If that sounds like you then please get in contact by emailing me at james.eddy@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or, if you prefer, you can drop off a letter at Harleston Information Plus or pop in to see me at HIP on the last Saturday of every month between 10am and 12.

All the best,

James

Appendix D

Town Council Meeting Report - 24th April 2024 Update on Feasibility and Design Study for New Community Building

1. Funding Success: The Town Council successfully secured funding from the South Norfolk Council for the Pride in Place Community Grant.
2. Contract Award and Tender Process: Chaplin Farrant was awarded the contract for the feasibility and design study on Thursday, 28th March. All other tender applicants were duly notified of the outcome.
3. Steering Group Establishment: A steering group has been established to oversee the feasibility study project. The group comprises:
 - Town Clerk: Clare Crane
 - Town Council Chair: Cllr P Mba (Mo)
 - Town Councillor: Cllr Keith Harrison
 - Community Infrastructure Officer (SNDC): Joel Pailes
 - Leisure Services Representative (SNDC): Steve Peet
4. Agenda for Steering Group Meeting: The following topics were discussed during the recent steering group meeting held on Monday, 15th April:
 - Introductions
 - Building on the Neighbourhood Plan for the Community Building
 - Financing, including CIL/S106
 - Site Considerations, including surveys, emergency plans, fire plans, existing drawings, TPO
 - trees, drainage, and asbestos assessment.
 - Engagement with potential future stakeholders.
 - The Town Council expressed its commitment to ensuring transparent communication.
 - throughout the project.
 - It was agreed that regular updates on the project's progress will be provided at each town.
 - council meeting. Additionally, a new page on the town's website will provide the community.
 - with regular updates.

Town Council – Progress Report – 29th May 2024

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Minutes Reference</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Assigned to</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Comments or further actions</u>
Full Council	28 th February 2024 Item 6a	Street Lighting Concerns Redenhall Road	Clerk to write to County Councillor Wilby for him to action.	Town Clerk	ASAP	Email has been sent to County Councillor Martin Wilby. Currently awaiting a response from Norfolk County Council regarding guidance on further steps to pursue this matter. Ongoing
Full Council	28 th February 2024 Item 8	London Road Parking Restrictions	Unanimously agreed for the Clerk to engage with the County Council regarding parking restrictions on London Road	Town Clerk	ASAP	Email has been sent to County Councillor Martin Wilby. Currently awaiting a response from the Parking Manager at Norfolk County Council regarding guidance on further steps to pursue this matter. Ongoing
Full Council	Wednesday 27 th March 2024 Item 23	Action Plan	The Clerk will now proceed to develop a framework to assist each task group.	Town Clerk	ASAP	Outstanding
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 6	Public Forum Traffic Enforcement	District Councillor Graham committed to acquiring a comprehensive report detailing the dates, duration of presence, and the number of tickets issued by Traffic Enforcement Officers. Additionally, he pledged to explore the feasibility of the Town Council funding	District Councillor Graham	ASAP	Outstanding

Town Council – Progress Report – 29th May 2024

			supplementary attendance, as proposed by the County Councillor.			
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 10c	Play Area Equipment	Unanimously agreed to use the S106 for the Tiger Mulch under the Zip wire.	Town Clerk/Operations Manager	ASAP	Operations Manager to place order Matter Closed
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 10d	Play Area Equipment	Unanimously agreed to defer the roundabout for a month in order that grant funding can be investigated fully for this item.	Town Clerk/Cllr West	May 2024	Cllr West working with the Play and Rec Association to pursue grants
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 11	The Market Town Network Improvement Strategy	Unanimously agreed for the Clerk to write NCC to advocate the study.	Town Clerk	ASAP	Email has been sent to Cabinet Member Graham Plant and NCC. Waiting for a response. Ongoing
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 12	Public Meeting for Biodiversity and Sustainability	Unanimously agreed for Cllr Wilkinson to proceed	Cllr Wilkinson	May/June 24	Confirmed to take place on the 10 th May 2024. Matter Closed
Full Council	Wednesday 24 th April 2024 Item 13	Harleston's Heritage Open Days	Unanimously agreed to support the initiative and for the Clerk to contact the group to confirm that Cllr Scade will be the contact for the council and that the council are happy to help in any way they can.	Town Clerk	ASAP	Action completed. Matter Closed

Item 17a

Regulatory reason	Payee Name	Transaction Details	Committee	Town Council	LCMC	Amenities	NET	VAT	TOTAL	Code/Cost Centre
Regular payments (BACS and or DDR) (5.6 Financial Regulations)										
									£ -	
Contractual	Cozens	Street Lighting - March	Amenities			£ 102.00	£ 85.00	£ 17.00	£ 102.00	4152 122
Contractual	KGB Commercial Heating	Plumbers (Annual Contracted Services only)	LCMC		£ 1,281.89		£ 1,068.24	£ 213.65	£ 1,281.89	4121/203
Obligation	Rejuvenate Yoga	Yoga Classes - March	LCMC		£ 191.00		£ 191.00	£ -	£ 191.00	4160 202
Obligation		Classes - March	LCMC		£ 497.00		£ 497.00	£ -	£ 497.00	4160 202
Contractual	Sonata	Annual maintenance contract - CCTV System NCP104 Issue 3	LCMC		£ 84.00		£ 70.00	£ 14.00	£ 84.00	4072 203
Contractual to be paid 30 April 2024	Magnus PR	April Event - Management for Harleston Town Council	TC	£ 1,600.00			£ 1,600.00		£ 1,600.00	4000 101
	Magnus PR	Easter Event - easter Eggs and Easter Event Flyers	TC	£ 120.35			£ 120.35		£ 120.35	4014 103
Contractual	Magnus PR	Hire of premium Rabbit for Easter event on Friday 5th April	TC	£ 575.00			£ 575.00		£ 575.00	4014 103
	Total to Magnus PR								£ 695.35	
Contractual	Rialtas	Annual Support and Maintenance Licence - 01.04.2024 - 31.03.2025	TC	£ 666.00			£ 555.00	£ 111.00	£ 666.00	4037 101
	Rialtas	Annual Subscription - Making Tax Digital (VAT) - 01.04.2024 - 31.03.2025	TC	£ 132.00			£ 110.00	£ 22.00	£ 132.00	4037 101
	Total to Rialtas								£ 798.00	
Obligation	Stonechild Meditation	Meditation Classes - 4, 11 & 15 March	LCMC		£ 127.00		£ 127.00	£ -	£ 127.00	4160 202
	Stonechild Meditation	Meditation Classes - 18, 22 & 25 March	LCMC		£ 122.00		£ 122.00		£ 122.00	4160 202
	Stonechild Meditation	Meditation Classes - 20 April	LCMC		£ 157.00		£ 157.00		£ 157.00	4160 202
	Total to Stonechild Meditation								£ 406.00	
Payments (BACS and or DDR) (4.1 Financial Regulations)										
	Robinsons	Flyers & double sided leaflets	LCMC		£ 44.80		£ 44.80		£ 44.80	4039
	Jonas King Locksmiths	Broken key extraction from public toilets	LCMC		£ -	£ 36.00	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00	4119 131
	UgoBuild Ltd	Cable ties	LCMC		£ 5.94		£ 4.95	£ 0.99	£ 5.94	4119 203
	UgoBuild Ltd	Lever Latch Door Pack -Satin Anodised Alum	LCMC		£ 12.74		£ 10.62	£ 2.12	£ 12.74	4119 203
	UgoBuild Ltd	Code lock Digital Brass	LCMC		£ 49.28		£ 41.07	£ 8.21	£ 49.28	4119 202
	UgoBuild Ltd	Self tapper zinc plated	LCMC		£ 5.17		£ 4.31	£ 0.86	£ 5.17	4119 202
	Total to UgoBuild								£ 73.13	
Approved by LCMC 10/04/24 • a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £500;	Gym Repair Services	Equipment Repairs - Long handle bar bearing bar, pedal set & foot straps	LCMC		£ 90.54		£ 75.45	£ 15.09	£ 90.54	4123 202
	Gym Repair Services	Treadmill - Lift Motor, Upright Bike - complete crank Assy with 2 hubs and pedals	LCMC		£ 738.00		£ 615.00	£ 123.00	£ 738.00	4123 202
	Total to GRS								£ 828.54	
	Parish Online	Parish Online - Annual mapping software April 3rd 2024 - April 3rd 2025	TC	£ 90.00			£ 75.00	£ 15.00	£ 90.00	
Approved by the Finance committee 17.04/24 - a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £500;	NALC	Annual Subscription 2024/25	TC	£ 978.07			£ 978.07		£ 978.07	4011 101
		HP 135X Black High Capacity Toner Cartridge W1350X	TC	£ 75.87			£ 63.23	£ 12.65	£ 75.88	4099 101
	DJ Ireland Groundworks	Replace Bollard on main car park in Harleston	Amenities			£ 236.09	£ 196.74	£ 39.35	£ 236.09	4113 123

		Gym Membership Refund	LCMC		£	32.00		£	32.00		£	32.00	4159 202
		Gym Membership Refund	LCMC		£	32.00		£	32.00		£	32.00	4159 202
		Gym Membership Refund	LCMC		£	32.00		£	32.00		£	32.00	4159 202
	Screwfix	Woodscrew Trade pack	LCMC		£	69.99		£	58.33	£	11.66	£	69.99 4119 201
	Coopers	Duracell Plus Power Batteries D MN1	LCMC		£	4.49		£	3.74	£	0.75	£	4.49 4039 202
		Microsoft Office 365 Home	TC		£	65.00		£	65.00		£	65.00	4037 101
Approved by TC - Grant awarding policy •the council for all items over £5,000;	Exchange 2	Grant - Exchange 2	TC		£	1,245.00		£	1,245.00		£	1,245.00	4090 101
Approved by TC - Grant awarding policy •the council for all items over £5,000;	HIP	Grant - HIP	TC		£	6,500.00		£	6,500.00		£	6,500.00	4090 101
Approved by TC - Grant awarding policy •the council for all items over £5,000;	Historical Society	Grant - Historical Society	TC		£	260.00		£	260.00		£	260.00	4090 101
Approved by TC - Grant awarding policy •the council for all items over £5,000;	Redenhall and Harleston with Wortwell PCC	Grant - Redenhall and Harleston with Wortwell PCC	TC		£	1,250.00		£	1,250.00		£	1,250.00	4090 101
		HR Support - 12th Feb to end March 2024	TC		£	168.75		£	168.75		£	168.75	4023 101
	My Sister's Wardrobe	JK Morron - reimbursing electricity for Christmas lights	TC		£	30.00		£	30.00		£	30.00	Misc. Amenities
	Petty Cash - Gym & TC	Office sundries	LCMC/TC		£	-	£	20.17		£	20.17	£	20.17 4039/101/202
	Petty Cash - Maintenance	Diesel for van and John Deere and coffee	LCMC/TC		£	-	£	53.99		£	53.99	£	53.99 4018/101/201/124
	<u>Total Petty Cash</u>										£	<u>74.16</u>	To be paid to the Clerk to reimburse.

Regulatory reason	Payee Name	Transaction Details	Committee	Town Council	LCMC	Amenities	NET	VAT	TOTAL	Code/Cost Centre
HMRC	HMRC	April Tax and PAYE	TC/LCMC				£ 5,297.16		£ 5,297.16	4001
Norfolk Pension Fund	NPF	April Pension	TC/LCMC				£ 5,907.25		£ 5,907.25	4006
Contractual	Cozens	Street Lighting - April	Amenities			£ 102.00	£ 85.00	£ 17.00	£ 102.00	4152 122
Lease	ASL	Photocopier - 19/03/2024 - 19/04/2024 plus cartridges	TC	£ 47.72			£ 39.77	£ 7.95	£ 47.72	4031 101
Lease	Ben Burgess	Lease of John Deere - 01/04/2024 - 30/04/2024	LCMC		£ 384.00		£ 320.00	£ 64.00	£ 384.00	4107/201
Stat Duty	MPLC	Umbrella licence Streaming Licence GYM	LCMC		£ 472.68		£ 393.90	£ 78.78	£ 472.68	4034 202
Obligation	Rejuvenate Yoga	Yoga Classes - April classes	LCMC		£ 216.00		£ 216.00		£ 216.00	4160 202
Obligation		Classes - April	LCMC		£ 377.00		£ 377.00		£ 377.00	4160 202
Obligation	Stonechild Meditation	Classes - April	LCMC		£ 154.00		£ 154.00		£ 154.00	4160 202
FR4.1	Top Garden Services	Tree Works and Stump Grinding	Amenities			£ 288.00	£ 240.00	£ 48.00	£ 288.00	4102 201 = Use £300 income from Pride in Bloom Grant received SNDC.
FR4.1	Barclaycard - Spotify	Licence	LCMC	£ -	£ 10.99		£ 10.99		£ 10.99	4034/202
FR4.1	Barclaycard - Amazon	Coffee cups - Gym	LCMC	£ -	£ 57.14		£ 57.14		£ 57.14	4039 202
FR4.1	Barclaycard - Nespresso	Nespresso - coffee supplies	LCMC	£ -	£ 95.20		£ 95.20	£ -	£ 95.20	4039 202
To request Approval from TC Chair via email for noting at the next Finance Meeting	Barclaycard - NCC	Norfolk County Council - Road Closures	TC	£ 360.00	£ -		£ 360.00		£ 360.00	103 Town Eventa
Stat Duty	Barclaycard - DVLA	DVLA - vehicle tax - maintenance van	TC	£ 337.50	£ -		£ 337.50		£ 337.50	4018/101
FR4.1	Barclaycard - Smarty	Vodafone hub - maintenance	LCMC	£ -	£ 10.00		£ 10.00		£ 10.00	4040/201
	Total to Barclaycard								£ 870.83	
FR4.1	Force Fresh	Centrefree Rolls	LCMC	£ -	£ 166.08		£ 138.40	£ 27.68	£ 166.08	4039 203 ?
Approved at LCMC 10/04/24 - Item 8C	TC Garrett	Carry out repairs to skylight in gym	LCMC	£ -	£ 901.44	£ -	£ 751.20	£ 150.24	£ 901.44	4117 203
Pay due to receiving Insurance compensation - note in May Town Council meeting	Keystone Building	Repair to town sign	TC			£ 940.80	£ 784.00	£ 156.80	£ 940.80	4195 101
Approved at Finance Meeting 17/04/24 Item 11	Intelligent Traffic Systems	Barrier - Melba Gate Anti Trip Feet	TC	£ 926.40			£ 771.75	£ 154.35	£ 926.10	EMR 344
FR4.1	Magnus PR	Feather Banner print design for Visit Harleston	TC	£ 242.00			£ 242.00		£ 242.00	4057/101
FR4.1	Magnus PR	Print of 400 Car Boot Sale flyers	TC	£ 50.00			£ 50.00		£ 50.00	4014 103
	Total to Magnus								£ 292.00	
FR4.1	ESPO	Notes, pens, calculator, stapler, A4 paper, shorthand notebook	LCMC	£ 29.64	£ 69.06		£ 82.25	£ 16.45	£ 98.70	4039 101 202
FR4.1	ESPO	Wipeboard Magnetic coated	LCMC	£ -	£ 25.20	£ -	£ 21.00	£ 4.20	£ 25.20	4039 202
	Total to ESPO								£ 123.90	
FR4.1	Workwear (East Anglia) Ltd	Safety boots - maintenance	LCMC		£ 75.00		£ 75.00	£ -	£ 75.00	4166 201
FR4.1	Robinson's Traditional Stationers	Gym timetables and box of PDQ rolls	LCMC	£ -	£ 16.20		£ 13.50	£ 2.70	£ 16.20	4039 202
FR4.1	Screwfix	Woodscrew Trade Pack 2800 Pcs (847PT)	LCMC	£ -	£ 69.99		£ 58.32	£ 11.67	£ 69.99	4119 201
Approved at Finance Meeting 17/04/24 - Item 12	Independent Memorial Inspection	IMI Clean War Memorial and surrounding area, steam letter re-enamelled	LCMC		£ 3,240.00		£ 2,700.00	£ 540.00	£ 3,240.00	EMR335
FR4.1	Elite TM Solutions Ltd	Bespoke signage - Car Boot Sale - 5th may 2024	TC	£ 180.00			£ 150.00	£ 30.00	£ 180.00	Town Events 103
FR4.1	Falcon Publications	Harleston Town Council Map	LCMC		£ 188.40		£ 157.00	£ 31.40	£ 188.40	4057 201
FR4.1		Refund Gym Membership	LCMC		£ 20.50		£ 20.50		£ 20.50	4159 202
To request Approval from LCMC Chair via email for noting at the next LCMC Meeting.	Top Garden Services	Grass Cutting - March	LCMC		£ 396.90		£ 330.75	£ 66.15	£ 396.90	4102 201
To request Approval from LCMC Chair via email for noting at the next LCMC Meeting.	Top Garden Services	Grass Cutting - April	LCMC		£ 529.20		£ 441.00	£ 88.20	£ 529.20	4102 201
	Total to TOPS						£ 771.75	£ 154.35	£ 926.10	
Approved by Amenities 1st May 2024 - Item 16. To request Approval from the Chair of Finance and to be noted at the next Finance Meeting 15/05/24	Bikedocksolutions Shelter Store	Topaz Bus Shelter	TC	£ 4,813.20			£ 4,011.00	£ 802.20	£ 4,813.20	EMR 334

Report to Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

The Internal Audit of the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024

1. Introduction and Summary.

1.1 The Internal Audit work undertaken confirmed that during the 2023/24 year the Council maintained effective governance arrangements including a robust framework of internal control and risk management. The Internal Audit review, undertaken on the documentation provided to the Internal Auditor and on the information published on the Council's website, has confirmed that the Council maintains an effective framework of financial administration and internal financial control.

1.2 The Internal Auditor attended the Council's Offices on 8 May 2024 to complete the End of Year Internal Audit review following work undertaken remotely/electronically in preparation for the completion of the review. The Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), Clare Crane, the Deputy Town Clerk, Emma Chandler and the Finance Administrator, Tracey Betts, were in attendance.

1.3 By examination of the 2023/24 accounts and supporting documentation it was confirmed that the Town Clerk, in the role as the Council's RFO, satisfactorily undertook the administration of the Council's financial affairs and produced satisfactory financial management information to enable the Council to make well-informed decisions.

1.4 The Accounts for the year confirm the following:

<i>Total Income for the year:</i>	<i>£718,364 (Boxes 2 and 3 in AGAR)</i>
<i>Total Expenditure in the year:</i>	<i>£621,976 (Boxes 4, 5 and 6 in AGAR)</i>
<i>Total Reserves at year-end:</i>	<i>£571,397 (of which £314,547.77 is earmarked/restricted)</i>

1.5 The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to the External Auditors was examined and the following figures agreed for inclusion in Section 2 Accounting Statements 2023/24 (rounded for purposes of the Return):

<i>Balances at beginning of year (1 April 2023):</i>	<i>Box 1: £475,009</i>
<i>Annual Precept 2023/24:</i>	<i>Box 2: £401,694</i>
<i>Total Other Receipts:</i>	<i>Box 3: £316,670</i>
<i>Staff Costs:</i>	<i>Box 4: £378,122</i>
<i>Loan interest/capital repayments:</i>	<i>Box 5: £8,803</i>
<i>All Other payments:</i>	<i>Box 6: £235,051</i>
<i>Balances carried forward (31 March 2024):</i>	<i>Box 7: £571,397</i>
<i>Total cash/short-term investments:</i>	<i>Box 8: £584,517</i>
<i>Total fixed assets:</i>	<i>Box 9: £2,558,778</i>
<i>Total borrowings:</i>	<i>Box 10: £22,009 (the sum outstanding on the Salix Finance loan).</i>

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Internal Audit Services

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1.6 Sections One and Two of the AGAR are due to be approved and signed at a forthcoming meeting of the Council. The Internal Auditor has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 within the AGAR.

1.7 The following Internal Audit work was carried out on the adequacy of systems of internal control in accordance with the Terms of Reference agreed with the Town Council. Comments and any recommendations arising from the review are made below.

2. Governance, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other Regulatory matters (*examination of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Formal Policies and Procedures, Tenders where relevant. Acting within the legal framework, including Data Protection legislation*).

2.1 The Annual Town Council meeting took place on 17 May 2023. The first item of business was the Election of a Chairman, as required by the Local Government Act 1972. The Council's representation on external bodies was also agreed.

2.2 The Council has a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in place, Mrs Clare Crane having been in post since 26 April 2021.

2.3 The Membership for four of the Council's Committees (Finance, Planning and Development, Leisure Centre Management Committee (LCMC) and Amenities) were reviewed and approved by the Council at its meeting on 17 May 2023, the Terms of Reference to be agreed at the first meeting of the Committees. The Membership of all the Committees (including the Executive Committee) are published on the Council's website. The Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee was agreed by Full Council on 19 July 2023.

2.4 During 2023/24 the Council constructed a Strategic Plan including the objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan and other strategic objectives and priorities for achievement over a 4-year period. A Draft Action Plan was considered by the Council at its meeting on 22 November 2023. The Council was invited to approve a proposed Final Plan on 20 December 2023 but as unanimous agreement for the plan was not reached, it was decided that the Clerk/RFO would determine the appropriate course of action and revisit this item in the future.

2.5 In the absence of an agreed Strategic Plan, at the meeting on 27 March 2024 the Council designated certain items as priorities and appointed a lead individual responsible for overseeing each task. The appointed lead was tasked with reporting back to the Town Council, providing a comprehensive description of the priority, establishing deadlines, and implementing monitoring procedures. The individual tasks were as follows:

- a. Community Infrastructure: Leisure Centre Building Improvement Project
- b. S106 & CIL Policies
- c. Legal Obligation: Obtaining Leases and Legal Agreements
- d. Emergency/Flooding Plan
- e. Review of the Neighbourhood Plan
- f. Councillor Surgeries

- g. Youth Forum
- h. Review of Signage in Town

2.6 The Cler/RFO explained to the Internal Auditor that this will act as a framework for achieving aims and objectives in a number of specific areas of the Council's activities.

2.7 The banking mandate (signatories) was approved by the Council on 27 June 2023 for all the Council's bank accounts 2023/24. (Two Councillor signatories with the Clerk/RFO and Deputy Clerk having online access to submit and approve payments online).

2.8 Formal Reports from the Chairman and the Clerk/RFO are presented to the Council as standing agenda items.

2.9 Standing Orders are in place. An amendment to the Standing Orders at item 18f was agreed by the Council on 19 July 2023. The Standing Orders were received and agreed by the Council on 27 March 2024 following a recommendation by the Executive Committee. A copy of Standing Orders has been published on the Council's website.

2.10 Financial Regulations are in place. An amendment to the Regulations at item FR 11c, footnote 2 was agreed by the Council on 19 July 2023. The Regulations were also reviewed and approved by the Council on 27 March 2024 following a recommendation from the Executive Committee. A copy of Financial Regulations has been published on the Council's website.

2.11 The Council's Financial Regulations require a formal review and approval by Full Council of key elements of financial activity. As a result the Council approved the Regular Payments list (in accordance with Financial Regulations (FR) 5.6), the use of variable direct debits (FR 6.7) and the use of BACS for the financial year (FR 6.8) at the meeting on 19 July 2023.

2.12 The Council has a **Neighbourhood Plan** (NP) in place. The Plan will shape the future of Redenhall with Harleston to 2038 and now forms one of the main considerations in determining any future planning applications submitted in the designated neighbourhood area. Details of the Plan have been published on the Council's website.

2.13 The Council adopted the **General Power of Competence (GPoC)** at the meeting on 17 May 2023, the Council being eligible to exercise this as at least 2/3rds of the total number of Councillors were elected at the ordinary election in May 2023 and because the Clerk held the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). Having met the conditions, the Council is eligible to use the GPoC for the next four years until May 2027.

2.14 The Council's Minutes are well presented and provide clear evidence of the decisions taken by the Council in the year.

2.15 The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a Fee Payer/Data Controller for the provision of council services under Data Protection

legislation (Registration Z2686677 refers, expiring 31 July 2024). The Registration includes reference to the Harleston Community Leisure Facility. A Privacy Statement is in place and a copy is published on the Council's website.

2.16 At the meeting on 27 March 2024 the Council reviewed and re-adopted the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct, which had been developed by the LGA to support all tiers of local government in maintaining high standards of leadership and performance. A copy of the Code has been published on the Council's website.

2.17 A Website Accessibility Statement has been published on the Council's website to assist compliance with the website accessibility regulations.

2.18 The **Town Centre Project** (Public Realm Improvement) was largely completed in the previous year (2022/23). The Project involved significant investment by South Norfolk District Council and Norfolk County Council. The contribution from the Town Council was capped at £30,000 and used for new environmentally friendly street furniture. Updates on the progress of the scheme have been posted on the Council's website. At its meeting on 22 November 2023 the Clerk/RFO provided an update on the outstanding matters and confirmed that the work was scheduled for completion in the first week of January 2024. The Clerk/RFO continued to make reports to Council on this matter in 2024 and confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the work is now complete.

2.19 At its meeting on 25 October 2023 the Council received and agreed the Leisure Centre Building electricity contract. The Council agreed a further 24-month contract with EDF to take effect from September 2024. A Feasibility Study is currently being undertaken on the future of the Leisure Centre building and information is being published on the Council's website regarding the progress of the Study.

3. Accounting Procedures and Proper Book-keeping (*examination of entries in the Cashbook, regular reconciliations, supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts and VAT accounting*).

3.1 The Rialtas accounting system was used in the year to produce the Council's Financial Reports and Statements. The financial system is well referenced and overall provides a good audit trail to the supporting documentation. The system has been used for the preparation of the 2023/24 End-of-Year accounts.

3.2 The Internal Auditor confirmed that the accounting package used by the Council in producing the accounts provide for the allocation of funds and expenditure to separate cost and nominal codes, that the information was being extracted on a monthly basis and that relevant information and data was being reported to the Council and appropriately recorded.

3.3 A sample of transactions, alongside their supporting invoices and vouchers, was examined by the Internal Auditor during this End of Year Audit and was found to be in order.

3.4 Re-claims for VAT paid have been regularly submitted to HMRC. Amounts reclaimed/paid in the year were as follows:

- a) £3,316.85 Net VAT reclaimed from HMRC for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 was received at bank on 26 April 2023.
- b) £2,674.92 Net VAT paid to HMRC on 15 September 2023 (past the due date for payment) relating to the period April 2023 to June 2023.
- c) £2,651.37 Net VAT was reclaimed for the period July 2023 to September 2023 but only £2,519.85 was repaid by HMRC, an amount of £131.52 having been charged by HMRC as a penalty for the previous late payment.
- d) £1,632.88 Net VAT was paid to HMRC on 6 February 2024 for the period October 2023 to December 2023.

3.5 The RBS accounting system displayed £490.93 as 'Net VAT to be paid to HMRC for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 and this has been correctly placed in the Balance Sheet as 'VAT Owed to HMRC' as at 31 March 2024.

3.6 The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that staff shortages due to staff illness during the Summer of 2023 resulted in some administrative duties, including the VAT return, being delayed and that HMRC deadlines for payment of VAT sums owed are now being met to avoid penalties being imposed by HMRC. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that additional administrative staff has since been appointed to assist with such tasks.

3.7 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 has been prepared by the Clerk/RFO. The Report displays a balance of £19,697.76 brought forward from previous years, £50,747.40 CIL Receipts in the year and an amount of £432.95 expended on a Stainless Steel Drinking Water Fountain at the Recreation Ground. The CIL balance retained at the year-end was £70,012.21 and is recorded in the End of Year Accounts as a Restricted Reserve.

3.8 The Council has comprehensive documentation and financial data in place. A Statement of Explanation of Variances (explaining significant differences in receipts and payments between the years 2022/23 and 2023/24) has been prepared by the Clerk/RFO for submission to the External Auditors and for publication on the Council's website.

3.9 The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that the Town Council signed a ten-year lease with South Norfolk Council in 2018 at £37,000 per year; this was following public opinion supporting the continuation of free car parking. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Co-operative Stores contribute a voluntary payment of £30,000 each year towards the cost of the lease and that the Council also receives contributions from local businesses and other parishes.

4. Bank Reconciliation (*Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements*).

4.1 The Barclays Bank Current Account, Business Premium Account, Base Rate Reward Account and Higher Rate Account bank statements as at 31 March 2024

reconciled with the End-of-Year Accounts and agreed with the overall Bank Reconciliation (see item 5 below).

4.2 The bank accounts were regularly reconciled to the Accounts during the year. The Council's Financial Regulations item 2.2 provide that *'On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Chair of the Finance Committee - unless they are the Chairman of the Council in which case the Vice Chair of the Finance Committee, or if not available, a cheque signatory - shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance Committee.'*

4.3 The Finance Committee regularly confirms the correctness of the bank reconciliations constructed by the Clerk/RFO in order to provide assurance to the Council that this key control measure is in place and has been confirmed as being in order.

4.4 The Council also displays good practice by nominating Councillors as Internal Examiners who are independent of any Finance Committee responsibilities or any authorising duties.

5. Year End procedures (Regarding accounting procedures used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents. Verifying sample payments and income. Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate).

5.1 End-of-Year accounts are prepared on an Income and Expenditure basis and were in good order. Sample audit trails were undertaken and were found to be in order.

5.2 The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet were examined in detail and queries arising from the review were resolved with the Clerk/RFO and the Financial Administrator. Key supporting entries in the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 included the following:

a) The Listed Debtors were recorded as £3,372.73 as at 31 March 2024 (consisting of prepayments to Zurich Insurance which spread into the 2024/25 year of account and some items of outstanding hire fees).

b) The Listed Creditors at the year-end totalled £16,001.93 and included the sums due to HMRC (PAYE and NI for March 2024), Pension Contributions to Norfolk Pensions (for March 2024) and invoices received in March 2024 and awaiting payment. Details were provided to the Internal Auditor.

5.3 The Council's End-of-Year Accounts have been reconciled to the Council's Bank Statements which display the following as at 31 March 2024:

	£
<i>Barclays Current A/C</i>	<i>168,110.91</i>
<i>Barclays Business Premium A/C</i>	<i>856.12</i>
<i>Barclays Base Rate Reward (re: car park lease)</i>	<i>65,880.37</i>
<i>Barclays Higher Rate</i>	<i>349,319.44</i>
<i>Petty Cash A/C (cash balance at 31 March 2024)</i>	<i>350.00</i>
<i>Bank Balance at 31 March 2024: Box 8 2023/24 AGAR</i>	<i>584,516.84</i>

Reconciliation between AGAR Box 7 and Box 8 is as follows:

	£
<i>Box 7: Account Balances at 31 March 2024:</i>	<i>571,396.71</i>
<i>Less: Total Debtors:</i>	<i>3,372.73</i>
<i>Add: Creditors:</i>	<i>16,001.93</i>
<i>VAT owed to HMRC:</i>	<i>490.93</i>
<i>Box 8: Total cash/investments at 31 March 2024:</i>	<i>584,516.84</i>

5.4 A sample of audit trails and a sample of entries in the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet were examined and were found to be in order.

6. Internal Control and the Management of Risk (Review by Council of the effectiveness of internal controls, including risk assessment, and Minuted accordingly).

6.1 At its meeting on 27 March 2024 the Council approved the adoption of the Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register following recommendations by the Executive Committee (Minute 20b refers). The Risk Assessment is comprehensive and identifies each Risk with appropriate risk ratings and values, the controls in place to mitigate the risk involved and any residual risk.

6.2 The Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control document was also reviewed and agreed by the Council on 27 March 2024 (Minute 20 f refers) and

assists in informing the Council in the completion of the Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR for 2023/24.

6.3 The Council accordingly complied with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require a review by the Full Council at least once a year of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, including the arrangements for the management of risk, with the review suitably Minuted.

6.4 Insurance was in place for the year of account. At the meeting on 27 June 2023 the Council considered the Zurich insurance policy renewal documents for the Council's insurance under the 3-year long term agreement active to 23 June 2025. The insurance year runs from 23 June 2023 to 22 June 2024. The Council approved the payment of the annual premium of £8,567.80.

6.5 The Buildings Insurance included cover for the Leisure Centre Complex, the Clock and Tower and Public Conveniences. The details of assets covered in All Risks are listed in the Policy Schedule.

6.6 The Council's Employer's Liability insurance cover in the year is £10m. and the Public Liability cover stands at £15m. The Fidelity Guarantee (Councillor/Employee Dishonesty) cover stands at £1m. and meets the current recommended guidelines which provide that the Fidelity Guarantee cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants received.

6.7 An important area of risk management within local councils concerns the adequate maintenance of play equipment. In this respect the Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Maintenance Team undertake weekly inspections and complete an inspection sheet to evidence the review and, in addition, an annual independent external RoSPA standard inspection is undertaken by David Bracey with a formal report presented to the Clerk/RFO.

7. Policies and Procedures in place

7.1 The Council has in place a Policy List, including review dates, as part of a structured and programmed review of the key policies. At its meeting on 27 March 2024 the following were received and agreed by the Council following recommendations from the Executive Committee:

- a. The Policy List
- b. Risk Management Policy and Risk Register
- c. Standing Orders
- d. Financial Regulations
- e. Reserves Policy
- f. Annual review of effectiveness of internal control
- g. Co-option Policy
- h. Retention Policy
- i. Review of Code of Conduct
- j. Grant Aid Policy
- k. CCTV Policy
- l. Communication Policy including social media.

m. Online Banking Policy

n. Asset Register for year ending March 2024.

7.2 The Clerk/RFO advised the Council on 27 March 2024 regarding any changes to the policies following which all were agreed for adoption and for publication on the Council's website.

7.3 In addition to the above the Council maintains further staffing and other policies including

- a. Equality Policy, and Sickness Policy (adopted on 25 May 2022),
- b. Allotment Policy and Rules and Regulations, Vexatious Correspondence Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy and Metal Detecting Policy (adopted 5 October 2022)
- c. Members Training Policy and an Exit Interview Policy (adopted 19 July 2023)

8. Budgetary controls (*Verification of the budgetary process with reference to Council Minutes and supporting documents*).

Precept 2023/24: £401,694 (25 January 2023, Minute 7).

Precept 2024/25: £413,756.82 (24 January 2024, Minute 7d).

8.1 At its meeting on 5 December 2022 the Finance Committee received and discussed the draft **2023/24 Budget** compiled by the Budget and Precept Working Party. At its meeting on 16 January 2023 the Finance Committee considered the Devolved Budgets 2023/24 from Committees and the Consolidated Budget 2023/24. Similarly, the Salary Budget, the Earmarked Reserves Budget and General Reserves, in line with the Reserves Policy, were reviewed.

8.2 On 26 January 2023 the Council considered the recommendations put forward by the Finance Committee and resolved to set a Precept of £401,694 for 2023/24 relating to £234.50 per average Tax Band D property. The Precept decision was taken in Full Council and the decision and the amount have been clearly Minuted.

8.3 At its meeting on 22 December 2023 the Council noted that through a series of working parties the Finance Committee had drafted a basic **2024/25 Budget** for the Council. The Finance Committee was awaiting the Committees with devolved budgets to add their budgets for collation. A draft Budget and precept request was considered by the Council on 20 December 2023. The Final 2024/25 Budget and Precept as recommended by the Finance Committee were approved by the Council at the meeting on 24 January 2024.

8.4 The Council received detailed estimates of the annual budget and of receipts and payments to enable Councillors to make informed decisions regarding the level of budget and precept to apply for the forthcoming year.

8.5 The Clerk/RFO ensures the Council is aware of its responsibilities and commitments and the need for forward planning and adequate reserves.

8.6 The Council demonstrates good financial practice by each Committee receiving updates on monthly income and expenditure on their responsible functions for budgetary control purposes

8.7 The Reserves Policy provides that the Council will follow the guidance given in "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England" which provides that the General Fund should be maintained at a minimum of 3 months' equivalent of Net Revenue Expenditure/Precept.

8.8 At the meeting on 24 January 2024 the Council approved the Earmarked Reserves Policy.

8.9 Overall Reserves available to the Council at the year-end 31 March 2024 totalled £571,397 of which £314,547.77 was Earmarked/Restricted Reserves (including the £70,012.21 CIL Restricted Reserve) leaving £256,849.23 as a General Reserve (62% or 7.5 months equivalent of the 2024/25 Precept).

8.10 The General Reserves available as at 31 March 2024 were in line with the Council's Reserves Policy and the generally accepted Best Practice position that non-earmarked revenue reserves should usually be between three and twelve months of Net Revenue Expenditure.

8.11 As at 31 March 2024 the Council maintained sufficient reserves and contingency sums to meet, within reason, any unforeseen items of expense that may occur.

9. Income Controls (regarding sums received from Precept, Grants, Loans and other income including credit control mechanisms).

9.1 Receipts are reported routinely to the Finance Committee at each meeting under the standing agenda item of Income and Expenditure Reports. The Internal Auditor examined Income Controls on a test-check basis and these were found to be satisfactory.

9.2 Income received and recorded in the Cashbook was cross referenced on a sample basis with the bank statements and found to be in order.

10. Petty Cash (Associated books and established system in place).

10.1 The Internal Auditor is charged to examine the Petty Cash accounting controls as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) certification work.

10.2 As at 31 March 2024 there is an overall Cash Float of £350. In practice this is operated as a Petty Cash float of £200 for Town Council & Leisure/Gym purposes and £150 for Maintenance in accordance with Financial Regulations item 6.17 which provides that:

'The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.

a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £200 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses, and a separate petty cash float of £150 for maintenance expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

c) Payments to maintain the petty cash floats shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council.'

10.3 The Finance Administrator supports the Clerk/RFO in the operation of the Petty Cash system and works to the procedures in place for operating the Petty Cash system for expenditure incurred including retaining appropriate and detailed vouchers in place to evidence payments drawn from the Account. The Petty Cash is topped up as required following drawings from the Petty Cash.

10.4 The £350 Cash Float has been placed in the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024. The Rialtas system maintains a record of the payments made from the Account and the actual cash balance at the end of each month.

11. Payroll Controls (PAYE and NIC in place; compliant with HMRC procedures; records relating to contracts of employment).

11.1 Payroll Services are outsourced to Callum Ward and Co (Harleston). Regular PAYE payments have been made to HMRC and detailed pay slips are produced for the Council employees. The Clerk/RFO provides the base information to Calum Ward for the calculation of salaries and wages. The data produced by Calum Ward is then checked by the Clerk/RFO prior to the electronic issue of pay slips and other documentation to staff. Salary is paid for the current month with any overtime and extras (classes) being paid from the previous month.

11.2 The Clerk/RFO provided the Internal Auditor with appropriate documentation to assist in the review of Payroll Controls.:

- Guidance Notes regarding the use of the system in place to calculate salaries and wages.
- Details of working hours, yearly salary (and pro-rata salary as appropriate), hourly rate and Spinal Point on the Salary Scale.
- Payslips for the month of March 2024.
- Overtime and additional hours and classes from January 2024.
- Pay Deduction Summary Sheet for March 2024
- The month end summary for March 2024.

The Internal Auditor examined a sample of salary payments made in March 2024 from the documentation made available and all items within the sample were found to be in order.

11.3 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that at its meeting on 15 November 2023 the Executive Committee noted the national JNC/NALC Local Government Officers' pay award for 2023/24 to be back dated to 1 April 2023.

11.4 The Norfolk Pension Fund is the Council's Automatic Enrolment Pension Scheme and the Clerk/RFO confirmed that all relevant staff have been invited to enrol.

11.5 Regarding compliance with Workplace Pensions legislation, the Council submitted a re-declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator on 30 August 2022. (The re-declaration of compliance confirms to the Pensions Regulator that the Council complies with its duties as an employer and has to be completed every three years).

12. Assets Controls (*Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets; recording of fixed asset valuations; cross checking on insurance cover*).

12.1 An Asset Register is in place was reviewed and adopted by the Council at its meeting on 27 March 2024 (Minute 20n refers).

12.2 The Council also noted on 27 March 2024 that the Clerk/RFO had undertaken the annual check of Stocks and Stores in accordance with FR item 13.4.

12.3 The Register displays a total value of £2,558,778 a net increase of £15,755 over the value of £2,543,023 as at 31 March 2023. Values are recorded at original purchase cost (where known) and a nominal value for community assets.

12.4 The Deputy Clerk provided the Internal Auditor with details of the additions/acquisitions in the year (totalling £17,845) and the disposals in the year (£2,090) to arrive at the net increase of £15,755 in the year.

12.5 The Register complies with the current requirements which provide that each asset should be recorded and displayed at a consistent valuation, year-on-year.

12.6 The value as at 31 March 2024 has correctly been entered into Part 2 of the AGAR 2023/24.

13. Responsibilities as a Trustee (*Regarding the Council's role and responsibilities under the Charity Acts; submission of returns to Charity Commission*).

13.1 The Council has no responsibilities as a Sole Trustee.

14. Internal Financial Controls, Payments Controls and Audit Procedures
(Confirmation that the Council has satisfactory internal financial controls in place for making payments with adequate documentation to support/evidence payments made. Any previous audit recommendations implemented).

14.1 The Council has a very active Finance Committee which normally meets on a monthly basis and examines a full range of financial operations within the Council.

14.2 The Committee's responsibilities and duties include the following:

- *to consider the income and expenditure reports and cash flows and to monitor these against the budgets.*
- *Co-ordinate the preparation of budgets annually for submission to the Full Council.*
- *Produce reports to the Full Council, no less frequently than quarterly, on any major deviation from budget that is likely to affect the final financial outcome.*
- *Request additional financial information from the RFO as required.*
- *Consider requests for expenditure from Committees with devolved budgets where the proposed expenditure is either in excess of the budgeted amount or not included in the budget.*
- *Consider grant applications from organisations based in Redenhall with Harleston or of benefit to residents.*
- *Committees with devolved budgets shall present their budget requests to the Finance Committee.*

14.3 Recommendations are put forward from the Finance Committee to Full Council which receives updates on monthly income and expenditure and provides approval of items of expenditure invoiced since the previous meeting.

14.4 The Council has satisfactory overall internal financial controls in place. The Clerk/RFO provides comprehensive financial reports to the Finance Committee and to Full Council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

14.5 An Online Banking Policy is in place, the Council having formally approved the Policy at its meeting on 27 March 2024. The Policy prescribes the procedure for On-line Payments as follows:

- *'All invoices and requests for payment will be verified for accuracy by the Town Clerk.*
- *Payments may only be made using online banking.*
- *Two authorised Signatories will confirm the payments online.*
- *Where payments are required in between meetings, the Clerk/RFO or Deputy Clerk will email copies of the invoices requiring payment to the Chair of the relevant Committee for approval and the Chair of Finance for information. Before the Clerk or Deputy Clerk set up a beneficiary and/or placing a payment request online.*
- *In the event that neither Councillors are able to authorise a payment and non-payment could lead to further costs, the Clerk will contact the Chair of Finance*

who will send email authorisation confirming that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk should make the payment.

- *Clerk/RFO and Deputy Clerk email all requests (payments list) to the Chair of Finance for actioning and copy the Chair of the Council for information or actioning in the absence of the Chair of Finance’.*

14.6 The Clerk/RFO confirmed to the Internal Auditor that at each meeting the Council receives an Income and Expenditure Report and within that authorises a list of payments made since the last meeting and a list of any additional payments due to be made. The Auditor examined the procedure in place for Council’s approvals and undertook test-checks within the following:

- a) On 27 June 2023 the Council received the months 1 and 2 Income and Expenditure reports examined by the Finance Committee on 21 June 2023.
- b) At the meeting on 19 July 2023 the Council received and examined (on behalf of the Finance Committee due to the cancellation of its meeting to enable the Council meeting to proceed) the contents of month 3 Income and Expenditure report and Bank Reconciliation. The Payments Lists for 19 June 2023 and 6 July 2023 were also presented to Council for approval.
- c) On 27 September 2023 the Council received and noted the contents of months 4 and 5 Income and Expenditure reports and Bank Reconciliations. The Council also received the Payments Lists for the 4 August, 16 August and 11 September 2023.
- d) On 24 January 2024 the Council received and noted the contents of months 6, 7 and 8 Income and Expenditure reports and Bank Reconciliations. The Council received the Payments List for 9 January 2024.
- e) On 28 February 2024 the Council received and noted the contents of months 9 and 10 Income and Expenditure reports and Bank Reconciliations and the Payments Lists for provided for 9 February 2024.
- f) On 27 March 2024 the Council received and noted the contents of month 11 Income and Expenditure report and Bank Reconciliation and Payments Lists provided for 21 February 2024 and 13 March 2024

14.7 The Clerk/RFO outlined the present arrangements in place for making on-line payments. The Clerk/RFO or the Deputy Clerk will initiate the payment within the Barclays Bank online payments system. The payment will then be authorised by email by the Chairman and another nominated Councillors having confirmed the payment against the relevant invoice or voucher prior to the Clerk/RFO or Deputy Clerk making the on-line payment. The Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that during 2024/25 it is planned that nominated Councillors will be able to authorise payments on-line to release the payment as an added level of security over the present arrangements

14.8 At its meeting on 27 June 2023 the Council agreed a schedule for independent financial scrutiny every quarter and for the findings to be reported back to the

Finance Committee for review. The Internal Auditor examined the following independent Councillor reviews:

Councillor Digby – Quarter 2 (for the period ending 30 September 2023, which was completed on 13 March 2024)

Councillor Chenery – Quarter 3 (for the period ending 31 December 2023, which was also completed on 13 March 2024)

14.9 Ideally the Councillor's reviews should take place as soon as possible after the end of the Quarter. The Clerk/RFO explained to the Internal Auditor that the delay in completing the reviews was due to staff sickness and staff shortages during 2023. The reviews undertaken will assist and inform the Council in its completion of the Annual Governance Report (Section 1 of the AGAR 2023/24) .

14.10 The Internal Audit report for the previous year (2022/23) was received and considered by the Council at its meeting on 27 June 2023. The Report had put forward 5 recommendations and the progress in meeting those is reviewed at Appendix A at the end of this report.

14.11 At its meeting on 24 January 2024 the Council asked the Clerk/RFO to produce a letter of engagement setting out the terms of the appointment to an internal auditor for the Financial Year 2023/24. At the meeting on 27 March 2024 the Council agreed the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the year (Minute 19 refers),

15. External Audit (*Recommendations put forward/comments made following the annual review*).

15.1 The External Auditors' Report and Certificate for the year 2022/23 was dated 23 September 2023 and was received and reviewed by the Council at its meeting on 25 October 2023. There were no matters of concern brought to the attention of the Town Council.

16. Publication Requirements.

16.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 authorities must publish each year the following information on a publicly accessible website.

Notice of the period for the exercise of Public Rights
AGAR - Sections 1 and 2.

16.2 The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the above documents relating to the year 2022/23 were readily accessible on the Council's website link:

<https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/finance/accounts-previous-years/>

16.3 Following the completion of the External Audit:

Notice of Conclusion of Audit

AGAR - Section 3

AGAR - Sections 1 and 2 (including any amendments as a result of the Limited Assurance Review).

16.3 The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the above documents relating to the year 2022/23 were readily accessible on the Council's website link:

<file:///C:/Users/owner/Downloads/Final-External-Auditor-Report-and-Certificate-2022-23.pdf>

16.4 The Council is meeting the publication requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which provides that larger parish/town councils which have gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeding £200,000 must publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £500. The details can be accessed on the Council's website link:

<https://harleston-tc.gov.uk/finance/accounts-current-year/>

17. Additional Comments.

17.1 I would like to record my appreciation to the Town Clerk/RFO, the Deputy Town Clerk and the Finance Administrator, for their assistance during the audit.



Trevor Brown, CPFA

Internal Auditor

9 May 2024

Appendix A

Progress being achieved in addressing the Recommendations in the 2022/23 End of Year Internal Audit Report dated 16 May 2023.

At its meeting on 27 June 2023 the Council received and reviewed the Internal Audit Report 2022/23 and considered the recommendations within the Report:

R1: In the interests of transparency and for the benefit of the local community, the Council should always ensure that all Minutes of the Council and its Committees are publicly available, and published on the Council's website, as soon as practicably possible after each meeting.

Update at 8 May 2024: This has been addressed.

R2: Bank Reconciliations should be received and verified on a regular and routine basis by either the Finance Committee and/or an appropriate Councillor Internal Examiner to ensure that the Council's Financial Regulations are being met in full and that there is a robust and independent inspection process in place.

Update at 8 May 2024: This matter has been addressed. Bank Reconciliations are being received and verified by the Finance Committee or the Council on a routine basis.

R3: The Asset Register requires review during the year 2023/24 to ensure that it is a working document that is fit for purpose and provides the information and data (both during the year and at the year-end) that can clearly and easily identify the acquisitions and disposals in the year of account and verify the correctness of the entry in Box 9 of the AGAR.

Update at 8 May 2024: This has been addressed.

R4: The External Auditors' Report and Certificate should be formally presented to Council and noted in the Minutes of the Council meeting to evidence that the document has been received by the Council and all matters arising from the Report have been noted and actioned where appropriate.

Update at 8 May 2024: This has been addressed in respect of the year 2022/23. The External Auditors' Report and Certificate for the year 2022/23 was dated 23 September 2023 and was received and reviewed by the Council at its meeting on 25 October 2023 (Minute 9 refers).

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

www.harleston-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.			
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

08/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

TREVOR BROWN C.P.F.A.

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

T. Brown

Date

08/05/2024.

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

Redenhall with Harleston 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 2024, 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:

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	544927	475009	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	351694	401694	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	213202	316,670	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	344416	378,122	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	8803	8803	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	281595	235,051	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	475009	571,397	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	485883	584517	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	2543023	2558778	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	30812	22009	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 exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 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

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

Redenhall with Harleston 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 2024; 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 2023/24

(Except for the matters 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 *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. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

8th May 2025

Adoption Date:
Date for review:

DD Month YYYY
on or before Month YYYY



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

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Draft



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

1. Introduction – Statutory Duty

- 1.1 Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- 1.2 Government guidance published on 1st May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:
 - 1.2.1 consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
 - 1.2.2 agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
 - 1.2.3 act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

2. Background

- 2.1. In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Redenhall with Harleston Town Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.
- 2.2. This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

3. Definitions

3.1. Biodiversity

- 3.1.1. According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animal and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.
- 3.1.2. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. Several studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water, and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

3.2. Sustainability

- 3.2.1. Defra's vision is clear and compelling: we are here to make our air purer, water cleaner, land greener and food more sustainable.
- 3.2.2. Protecting the environment and benefiting the communities where we work while conducting our business in a socially responsible manner.

4. Aims and Objectives

- 4.1. The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.
- 4.2. The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

4.3. In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- 4.3.1.
- 4.3.2. consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- 4.3.3. manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- 4.3.4. support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- 4.3.5. encourage and support other organisations within the Redenhall with Harleston area to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- 4.3.6. support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

5. Actions

5.1. Planning applications

The Council will:

- 5.1.1. when commenting on planning applications will refer to the Redenhall with Harleston Neighbourhood Plan and the Redenhall with Harleston Design Guidance and Code specifically:
 - 5.1.1.1. Policy RWH21 Natural Assets
 - 5.1.1.2. Policy RWH22 Climate Change and Flood Risk and SU.02 Biodiversity gain.

5.2. Land and property management

The Council will:

- 5.2.1. carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings or if already available from external sources utilise this and adopt into a formal document.
- 5.2.2. consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity regarding the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products.
- 5.2.3. take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards is carried out in collaboration with a biodiversity plan (for example leaving specific areas uncut) and does not harm the natural environment.
- 5.2.4. source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
- 5.2.5. consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

5.3. Local community

The Council will:

- 5.3.1. raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

5.3.2. engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.

5.3.3. where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

5.4. Partners

5.4.1. The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

5.4.2. It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

6. Monitoring

This policy was adopted on (date here) (minute reference XX) and will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation dictates. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

7. Associated Documents

- Environment Act 2021 Section 102
- Norfolk County Council Environmental Policy
- South Norfolk District Council Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023-2025
- Redenhall and Harleston Neighbourhood Plan
- Redenhall and Harleston Design Guidance and Code
- Norwich City Council Biodiversity Strategy 2022 -2032
- Norwich City Council Environmental Strategy 2020-25
- Norwich City Council Environmental Strategy 2020-25 Action Plan

8. Useful links

[Norfolk and Suffolk Natural Capital Assets Evidence Compendium | Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service \(nbis.org.uk\)](#)

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Norfolk County Council](#)

[Nature Recovery Area – Harleston Town Council \(harleston-tc.gov.uk\)](#)

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council adopted the Biodiversity and Sustainability Policy

At the Town Council meeting held on DD Month YYYY

Signed (Chair)

Next Review is on or before Month YYYY



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Menopause Policy

8th May 2025

Adoption Date:
Date for review:

DD Month YYYY
on or before Month YYYY



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Menopause Policy

Menopause Policy

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Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Menopause Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. We recognise that for some employees the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives. However, menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of the menopause and familiarise themselves with this policy so that they can support those going through it or who are otherwise affected by it. This policy sets out our approach to dealing with workplace issues relating to the menopause. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause includes the perimenopause.

2. Aims of this policy

2.1. The aims of this policy are to:

- 2.1.1. Inform managers and employees about the menopause and associated rights in order to raise awareness.
- 2.1.2. Reduce sickness absence and to support staff whose performance is impaired due to menopausal symptoms in order to increase productivity and well-being and to retain valued staff in the workplace.
- 2.1.3. Create an environment where female staff members feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work.
- 2.1.4. Promote the well-being and health of all employees.
- 2.1.5. Offer assistance and advice to employees who need it by:
 - 2.1.5.1. encouraging health and well-being conversations between managers and staff;
 - 2.1.5.2. putting in place regular reviews with the employee's line manager for additional support, if required; and
 - 2.1.5.3. offering reasonable workplace adjustments and, where required, actively encouraging employees with symptoms that impact their work life to seek appropriate help by encouraging the employee to speak to their GP in the first instance and signposting the employee to appropriate sources of help and advice (see below 'External links for advice, training and support').

3. What is the menopause

- 3.1. The menopause is a natural event in women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each woman's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. It may also occur as the effect of a medical condition or following surgery or a medical procedure. Those who experience menopausal symptoms can include trans, intersex and non-binary people. Perimenopause, begins several years before menopause and can involve similar symptoms to the menopause itself. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.
- 3.2. Symptoms of the menopause can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, night sweats, recurrent urinary tract infections, fatigue, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, heavy periods, depression and anxiety.
- 3.3. Each of these symptoms can vary in severity and can affect an employee's well-being, attendance and performance at work.



Menopause Policy

4. Support and adjustments

- 4.1. While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to help them better manage the impact of menopause symptoms on their work.
- 4.2. Staff who believe that they would benefit from adjustments or other support, should speak to their line manager in confidence in the first instance. If they feel unable to do so, they should speak to another manager of their choice.
- 4.3. Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provisions of electric fans or access to rest facilities and adjustments to the dress code where reasonable. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, more frequent rest breaks or changes to the work role or task allocation may also be considered where these can be accommodated. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list. Any adjustments requested will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given as to whether we may reasonably accommodate the requested adjustment based on business considerations and the practicality of implementing the adjustment at the time. Any agreed adjustments should be kept under review. Any request to work flexibly will be considered in accordance with our flexible working policy.
- 4.4. We may request your written permission to seek medical advice from your GP or consultant, or to refer you to a doctor or consultant selected by us to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work. In that circumstance, we will meet the costs of the medical report.
- 4.5. Staff should refer to our sickness absence and sick pay policy, where they are unable to attend work due to symptoms related to the menopause.

5. Discrimination

- 5.1. We seek to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment and bullying based upon age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. These are known as the 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2. The menopause can, depending on the severity of the symptoms, amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Managers must ensure that they do not treat employees less favourably than others as a result of a disability and must also make reasonable adjustments as required to ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged as a result of their disability (see above, 'Support and adjustments').
- 5.3. Managers must ensure that employees experiencing the menopause are not indirectly discriminated against. For example, a requirement to wear a uniform made of synthetic fabric, or a uniform that does not permit 'layering' could indirectly discriminate against an employee experiencing regular menopausal hot flushes on grounds of disability, sex and age.
- 5.4. The Equality Act 2010 also prohibits discrimination arising from disability. This is where an employee is treated unfavourably because of something arising as a result of a disability, for example, due to their sickness absence as a result of menopause symptoms, where the symptoms are an impairment which amount to a disability. Unfavourable treatment can be defended if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Menopause Policy

5.5. The Equality Act 2010 also prohibits harassment based on a protected characteristic. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, such as sex, age and disability, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected cases of harassment, bullying or intimidation including in relation to the menopause. Employees are encouraged to raise any concerns with their line manager. Any employee who is found to have bullied or harassed another employee, or discriminated against them in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

6. Health and safety

6.1. We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider making adjustments to any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms where reasonable and appropriate. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those going through the menopause and putting in place appropriate measures identified by the risk assessment so far as reasonably practical. These may include physical aspects of the working environment such as temperature and ventilation issues, as well as welfare issues; such as ensuring access to toilet facilities, a rest room or quiet space and cold drinking water. The risk assessment may also include ensuring, so far as possible, a safe system of work that does not make menopause symptoms more difficult for the employee to manage.

6.2. Employees are also responsible for taking care of their own health and safety and for raising any issues of concern with us. Staff are expected to co-operate with us in the implementation of this policy; in particular by supporting any necessary adjustments put in place for their colleagues as a result of their colleagues' menopausal symptoms and contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment.

7. Training

7.1. We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction to enable line managers to deal with staff issues relating to the menopause and to raise awareness of this policy with staff. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring they raise awareness of this policy within the departments for which they are responsible.

8. Data protection

8.1. We will process any personal data collected under this policy in accordance with our data protection policy. Data collected in accordance with this policy will only be used by, and disclosed to, individuals for the purposes of providing the necessary support. Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data will constitute a data breach and should be reported immediately to our Data Protection Officer [Data representative] in accordance with our data protection policy. Reported data breaches will be investigated and may lead to sanctions under the disciplinary procedure.

9. External links for advice, training and support

Menopause Matters <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

NHS Choices <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Menopause Policy

The Daisy Network (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency)
<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

Menopause Services NHS GG&C <https://www.sandyford.org/sexual-health-information/fertility/menopause/>

The Menopause Exchange <https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/>

Living Life (Online/Telephone guided CBT) <https://breathingspace.scot/living-life/>

Women's Health concern <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Remploy (mental health support service) <https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplacemental-health-support-service-employers>

Henpicked (community site for women over 40) <https://henpicked.net/>

Menopause Café (gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause)
<https://www.menopausecafe.net/>

Pausitivity (for access to a menopause support pack and posters)
<https://www.pausitivity.co.uk/>

Menopause Experts Training <https://www.menopauseexpertstraining.com/>

ACAS guidance on supporting staff through the menopause
<https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work/supporting-staff-through-the-menopause>

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council adopted the Menopause Policy

At the Town Council meeting held on DD Month YYYY

Signed (Chair)

Next Review is on or before Month YYYY