2023-2024 Annual Report



We work together to enable Senford communities and the Town Council to thrive



Seaford Town Council

37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk



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THE TOWN COUNCIL

Seaford Town Council is made up of a team of council officers and 20 councillors.

Councillors are elected by residents and look after specific areas (wards) for the period they are elected, usually four years. Councillors work together, as a corporate body, to ensure that the Town Council continues to represent the needs of the town, its residents and visitors.

Council officers are employed by the Town Council, as a corporate body, and work to deliver the strategy and decisions of the Town Council. Officers also play a key role in ensuring councillors are informed and supported to do their roles.

Both councillors and officers work hard to ensure that the Town Council engages and communicates with its key stakeholders and partners - residents, visitors, local business' and groups, other local authorities and so on. This is achieved by regular public meetings, having open communication channels for the public to use and be consulted through, and nurturing and maintaining key relationships.

Municipal services within Seaford are provided by three tiers of local government - the County Council (East Sussex), the District Council (Lewes) and the Town Council. While working closely together for the town, each authority has its own areas of





THE MAYOR OF SEAFORD - 2023-2024 COUNCILLOR OLIVIA HONEYMAN

A message from the Mayor

The Mercread Youth Centre and The Youth Counselling Project have been my chosen charities this Mayoral year. I have enjoyed working with them, attending events, raising money, and raising awareness of their work in the community. Thank you to both charities who work so hard for the Seaford residents.

Thank you to all of the charities who do so much work in the Seaford Community. Thanks to everyone who has helped with the various Mayoral functions, Civic Service and Mayor's Carol concert, they were amazing events. Many thanks especially to the Seaford Town Council officers who manage the Civic Office, and to Cllr Sally Markwell, who has been a very supportive Deputy Mayor



2023/2024 GRANTS SCHEME



In 2023/2024 the Town Council granted £25,000 as part of its annual grants scheme to benefit the town and its residents.

The Town Council thanked these organisations for their continued hard work and contribution to the town and was delighted to be able to assist and support these organisations where possible.

Seaford Cricket Club was awarded £310 towards purchasing branded feather flags to be used at events along with the purchase of promotion flyers.

Care for the Carers was awarded £767 to reach more young carers in the Seaford Area by running two activities at the Mecread Youth Centre to include arts and crafts, sport of cooking along with providing advice and support from the team.

Cradle Hill P.T.F.A was awarded £2,815 towards providing an outdoor quiet play zone which will be fenced, seated and sheltered. This would also double up as an outside learning area.

Cuckmere Community Bus was awarded £2000 to help meet ongoing annual running costs and avoid/minimize deficits and help bridge the gap between income and expenditure.

Friends of Bishopstone Station CIC was awarded £1,400 to help fund IT equipment, cleaning costs and accountancy fees relating to our two community projects, Meet up Mondays and Bishopstone Station Community Food Project.

GIA (Gardening in Action) CIC was awarded £1,789 to support the Peverells Community Garden with providing one year's welfare facilities, part funding of wheelchair matting and a colour laser printer with supplies.

Cont. Over.





Havens Community Hub was awarded £502 to support the expansion and development of Havens Food Co-Operative Pop Up Pantry Scheme allowing operations to continue and more partnership working to take place.

Mercread Youth Centre was awarded £2,500 to convert the Main Entrance Door into an Automatic Access door for wheelchair users and general easier access.

Seaford Bonfire Society was awarded £2,000 towards the cost of medical emergency professionals along with the costs towards the event security.

St James' Trust (Seaford) was awarded £2,475 towards the weekly cost of a mini-bus hire for the Tuesday Lunch Club.

Teddy Treats Childrens Charity was awarded £2,815 to support Local Children to attend dance, singing & art activities.

The Youth Counselling Project was awarded £2,815 to provide sixty sessions of wellbeing support and mental health interventions to six additional children or young people in need in Seaford.

Waves (Seaford) was awarded £2,815 to enable improvement and expansion of services during the next twelve Months by offering practical help & emotional support to families and children experiencing short or long-term difficulties. Furthermore, to enable an additional fifty wellbeing/counselling sessions to families and children in need and distress.

Details of all years and upcoming Grants Schemes can be found here: https://www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk/community-grants/





The Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 set out the responsibilities of all local councils in respect of their accounting and auditing procedures.

Each year, the Town Council's financial accounts and statements must be examined by an independent internal auditor appointed by the Council. For the year 2021-22 this was Mark Mulberry and Co.

The Town Council is also required to complete an Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) which includes the findings of the Internal Auditor, together with Governance Statements and Financial Statements. The AGAR is then submitted to the independent external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission for examination.

A summary of this year's audit process is detailed overleaf, together with copies of the relevant documents.

The Town Council's Financial Statements and Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) submission for the year-ending 31st March 2023 have been checked by Mark Mulberry and Co and subsequently approved by the Full Council at its meeting held on Thursday 29th June 2023.

The completed AGAR, together with the relevant supporting documentation, was then submitted to the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP who were required to complete their review by 30th September 2023.



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

- 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.
- 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 checkl	ist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements	Yes	N		
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?	V			
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	V			
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?	V			
	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.	N	A		

*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

SEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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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.

ln	ternal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered"
A.	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	/	-	
В.	This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	V		
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.	V		
E.	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	1		
F.	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	1		
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.	1		
H.	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	V		
I.	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	/		Fig. 1
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.	1		
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).	/		
0.	(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable

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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

31/05/2024

07/11/2023

M. WEBBER - MUBERLY LAS UND

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

M Webro

31/05/2024

'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:

SEAFORD 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*	Yes'm	eans that this authority:	
 We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. 	1			ed its accounting statements in accordance Accounts and Audit Regulations.	
We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	1		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.		
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.		
 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. 	1		during the year gave all persons interested the opportur inspect and ask questions about this authority's account		
 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. 	1		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.		
We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	1		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.		
 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit. 	1		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.		
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	1		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.		
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.	

^{*}Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:	Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:				
20/06/2024	Chair Science Minister				
c29/06/24	Clerk Clerk				

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

SEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL

	Year en	ding	Notes and guidance		
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.		
Balances brought forward	1,150,339	1,742,786	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.		
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,044,965	1,061,609	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.		
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,858,980	1,590,398	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	905,279	1,022,372	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.		
 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments 	121,854	119,979	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).		
6. (-) All other payments	1,284,365	1,567,721	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash- book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).		
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,742,786	1,684,721	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	1,887,534	1,694,421	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.		
Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	10,927,096	10,790,047	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	1,397,286	1,325,624	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)		1		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)			1	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

Cur Course

31/05/2024

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

20/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

C30/06/24

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

Saely Martin



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

In respect of

Seaford Town Council - ES0088

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

and the second second second second		teu assurance t			
On the basis of our Sections 1 and 2 of relevant legislation	review of Sections 1 f the AGAR is in accor and regulatory require	and 2 of the Annual Govern dance with Proper Practice ements have not been met.	nance and Accountability is and no other matters h	Return (AGAR), in our opi ave come to our attention	nion the information in giving cause for concern that
Please see below					
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Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We are unable to complete our review work on the AGAR and supporting documentation as a result of correspondence received in relation to 2023/24 and/or prior years. Once we have finalised our review and completed any additional work arising from that correspondence, a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and "other" matters.

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We do not certify completion because:

We have received correspondence bringing information to our attention that we must consider before certifying the completion of our review and the discharging of our responsibilities.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

Pat titliget 115

Date

19/09/2024

TOWN COUNCILLORS

In May 2023, an ordinary election took place to fill Seaford Town Council's 20 seats.

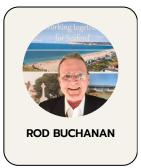
The following Town Councillors were elected and form the 2023-2027 administration of Seaford Town Council:

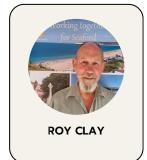










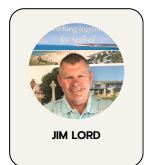


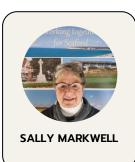






























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