

Barton Bendish Parish Council

Background information for Annual Governance Statement assertions 2023-24

Prepared to assist Councillors when considering the assertions on the Annual Governance Statement form

Assertions on form:	What the council does:
<p>Assertion 1 — We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.</p>	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget approved before setting Precept requirement. Budget monitored regularly during the year. • The appointed RFO has effective procedures to accurately and promptly record all financial transactions and maintain up to date accounting records throughout the year, together with all necessary supporting information. • Bank reconciliations with supporting bank statements are presented at each meeting by the RFO for the Chairman to check and sign. • Statement of Accounts has been properly prepared via Scribe software. • Reserves both general and earmarked are reviewed by Council during the year.
<p>Assertion 2 - We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.</p>	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place and reviewed either every 3 years or sooner where changes are required • The Council review their financial internal controls and financial risk statement annually • Bank mandate changes are approved by full council • All payments, including staffing, are approved by Council. Payments are set up by the Clerk/RFO and can only be authorised by 2 Councillors upon sight of supporting documentation • Asset list is reviewed annually
<p>Assertion 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 smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.</p>	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council acts within its powers laid out in Statute. • The Council, having met the criteria, formally adopted the General Power of Competence in May 2023. • The Council has its own email and has approved moving the email to .gov.uk
<p>Assertion 4 - We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements</p>	<p>In order to warrant a positive response to this assertion the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return:</p>

of the Accounts and Audit Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provided for the exercise of public rights as set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.
Assertion 5 - We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has identified its risks, assessed the risks and addressed the risks. The council holds earmarked reserves, where needed, for potential future costs and has insurance in place.
Assertion 6 - We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council appointed a competent and independent person to conduct an internal audit and worked with the IA in providing them with all the documents they require.
Assertion 7 - We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council considered the recommendations of the internal auditor and has taken necessary actions.
Assertion 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 smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements	<p>To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the following processes are in place and effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council considered the loss of 'keyworker' insurance cover when renewing its insurance policy and resolved to, instead, hold an earmarked reserve for unplanned staffing costs (eg Locum cover due to sickness)
Assertion 9 - 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.	n/a. While the council is a managing Trustee of the Poor's Charity, it is not a sole managing Trustee.

Recommendation:

The Council are able to declare **YES** to all the Annual Governance Statement assertions, except number 9 which is not applicable.