Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

STEYNING PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	*No**	*'Yes' means that this authority:*
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*

	Yes	No	N/A	
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.			✓	*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:

19/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

FULL / 23 / 27.1

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

Chairman

Clerk

www.steyningpc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

STEYNING PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*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.*
1. Balances brought forward	219,482	304,206	*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	322,305	332,357	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	153,043	115,633	*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	131,850	173,546	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	258,774	279,185	*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	304,206	299,465	*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	327,340	324,160	*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	2,709,115	2,515,129	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	*The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 30/05/2023

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

19/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

FULL / 23 / 27.1

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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

In respect of STEYNING PARISH COUNCIL

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

(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 2022/23

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 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YYYY

Explanation of variances 2022/23 – pro forma

Name of smaller authority:

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all Blue highlighted boxes

Now, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £500);
- variances of more than £100,000 must be explained even where this constitutes less than 15%;
- a breakdown of approved reserves on the next tab if the total reserves (Box 7) figure is more than twice the annual precept value (Box 2).

Please ensure variance explanations are quantified to reduce the variance excluding stated items below the 15% / £500 / £100,000 threshold

	2023 £	2022 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required? Is > 15%	Is > £100,000	DO NOT OVERWRITE THE BOXES HIGHLIGHTED IN RED/GREEN	Explanation (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	304,206	219,482					Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	332,357	322,305	10,052	3.12%	NO	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	115,633	153,043	-37,410	24.44%	YES	NO	Last year (2022) this line recorded a one-off income increase (variance) of £51,895.54 - This was due to our council (Steyning PC) showing a sum of money in its earmarked reserves from a joint parishes cemetery committee for the first time, whereas previously these monies had been reported from (and held within the accounts of) the other lead Parish Council (Upper Beeding PC), who had financial responsibility for the Cemetery Committee. Therefore without this one off income figure affecting income totals, this year the numbers are actually net £14K up on last years 'Total Other Receipts' figure - this trend being primarily due to a continued recovery of room hire enquiries and hence income from the Steyning Community Centre, after the Covid Pandemic had forced lock down in the previous year.	
4 Staff Costs	173,546	131,850	41,696	31.62%	YES	NO	The Covid pandemic reduced the need for staff cover and therefore staff costs in the previous year 21/22. In terms of the 22/23 figure:- The nationally agreed salary increase for April 22 raised expenditure by £3.8K. Also, in December '22 there was a staff regrading which increased Staff salaried costs in 22/23 by a total of £16.8K year on year. Plus, part time casual staff costs increased due to significant statutory minimum wage increases from April 2022	
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO	NO		
6 All Other Payments	279,185	258,774	20,411	7.89%	NO	NO		
7 Balances Carried Forward	299,465	304,206	-4,741	1.56%	NO	NO		
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	324,160	327,340	-3,180	0.97%	NO	NO		
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and Assets	2,515,129	2,709,115	-193,986	7.16%	NO	YES	After a great deal of investigation SPC found that whereas historically there had been an assumption that the Town Clock Tower had been owned by the Parish Council, it was found to be owned by another party. Instaed the Parish Council owned only the Clock mechanism and the Clock Faces upon the Clock Tower. This Asset register disposal amounted to £124,258.12. After investigation the previous year, it was also found that the Bowls Club pavillion was in fact owned by the Bowls Club and not by the Parish Council (The Parish Council continues to own the Land on which the Pavillion stands) - Another Asset register disposal of £124,630.00 for 2022/23	
10 Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0.00%	NO	NO		
Excessive Reserves Ratio	0.90103	0.94385						

Explanation for 'high' reserves

(Please complete or update the highlighted boxes when the total in Box 7 is greater than 2 times the value of Box 2)

Box 7 is more than twice the value of Box 2 because the authority held the following breakdown of reserves at the year end:

		£	£	£
Earmarked reserves*:				
	Reserve 1	1118.75		
	Reserve 2	1000		
	Reserve 3	1142		
	Reserve 4	5000		
	Reserve 5	6750		
	Reserve 6	2000		
	Reserve 7	3743		
	Reserve 8	10201.46		
	Reserve 9	80000		
	Reserve 10	58780.95		
			169736.16	
General reserve		129729		
			129729	
Total reserves (must agree to Box 7)				**299465.16**
Box 7 per Annual Return				299,465
Difference				0

PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS DIFFERENCE

Column B - Reserves should be renamed to show the specific purpose / name given by this authority.

Columb D - Earmarked items - a value for the amount earmarked for each specific reserve should be enterd. There maybe fewer than 5 reserves or more and the number can be reduced or extended as appropriate.

Column D - General reserves - this should relate to normal operating funds and should be the difference between the total of all Earmarked reserves and the value of Box 7 on Section 2 of the AGAR.