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Email:
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Date:
26 September 2023

Our Ref:
DV0348

SAAA Ref:
SB08325

**Swimbridge Parish Council
Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2023**

Dear Mrs Wadsworth

We have completed our review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Swimbridge Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2023. Please find our external auditor report and certificate (Section 3 of the AGAR Form 3) included for your attention as an attachment to the email containing this letter along with a copy of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, on which our report is based.

The external auditor report and certificate details any matters arising from the review. The smaller authority must consider these matters and decide what, if any, action is required.

Action you are required to take at the conclusion of the review

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234) set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

- Prepare a "Notice of conclusion of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements. We attach a pro forma notice you may use for this purpose (a Word version is available on request).
- Publish the "Notice" along with the certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) before 30 September, which must include publication on the smaller authority's website. (Please note that when the statute and regulations were amended in 2014 and 2015, they did not include a requirement for the length of time for which that the "Notice" must be published. The previous statute required 14 days; but it is now up to the authority to make this decision).
- Keep copies of the AGAR available for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the published AGAR remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication.

Fee

We enclose our fee note, on page 4 of this attachment, for the limited assurance review, which is in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd which can be found at <https://saaa.co.uk/fees.html>. This fee is statutory, must be paid and is due immediately on receipt of invoice, please arrange for this to be paid **at the earliest opportunity**.

Additional charges are itemised on the fee note, where applicable. These arise where either:

- we have had to issue chaser letters and/or exercise our statutory powers due to a failure to provide an AGAR by the submission deadline; or
- it was necessary for us to undertake additional work.

Please return the remittance advice with your payment, which should be sent to: PKF Littlejohn LLP, Ref: Credit control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4HD. Please include the reference DV0348 or Swimbridge Parish Council as a reference when paying by BACS.

Timetable for 2023/24

Next year we plan to set a submission deadline for the return of the completed AGAR Form 3 and associated documents (or Certificate of Exemption) in the usual way and this is expected to be Monday 1 July 2024. It is anticipated that the instructions will be sent out during March 2024, subject to arrangements for the 2023/24 AGARs and Certificates of Exemption being finalised by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited (SAAA). Our instructions will cover any changes about which smaller authorities need to be aware.

- The smaller authority must inform the electorate of a single period of 30 working days during which public rights may be exercised. This information **must be published at least the day before** the inspection period commences;
- The inspection period **must** include the first 10 working days of July 2024, i.e. 1 to 12 July inclusive. In practice this means that public rights may be exercised:
 - at the earliest, between Monday 3 June and Friday 12 July 2024; and
 - at the latest, between Monday 1 July and Friday 9 August 2024.

As in previous years, in order to assist you in this process we plan to include a pro forma template notice with a suggested inspection period on our website. On submitting your AGAR and associated documentation, as was the case for this year, we will need you to either confirm that the suggested dates have been adopted or inform us of the alternative dates selected.

We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners' Guide 2023 which is mandatory for the 2023/24 period. Paragraph 1.26 relates to the requirements in relation to Assertion 3 and states '*Email management - every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council and to which the council has access – this ideally would be a .gov.uk or .org.uk address or could be an address linked to the council website.*' In order to answer yes to Assertion 3 in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement the local authority should ensure that it has an email address that complies with this requirement and if it does not already it should do so urgently.

Feedback on 2022/23

Please note that if you wish to provide feedback, our satisfaction survey template can be used, which is available on our website on this page: <https://www.pkf-l.com/services/limited-assurance-regime/useful-information-and-links/>

Yours sincerely

PKF Littlejohn LV

PKF Littlejohn LLP