



Middleton St George Parish Council

www.middleton-st-george.org.uk

clerk@middleton-st-george.org.uk

TRANSPARENCY CODE 2022-23

1. Background

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 came into effect on 1 April 2015. The code is issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The code does not replace or supersede the existing framework for access to and re-use of public sector information provided by the:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005
- Sections 25 and 26 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 which provides rights for persons to inspect a local authority's accounting records and supporting documentation, and to make copies of them.

Middleton St. George Parish Council does not meet the definition of a local authority covered by the requirements of the code, defined as '*a parish council which has gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) exceeding £200,000*'. However the Parish Council at its meeting held on the 11th September, 2017 agreed that, although the Transparency Code does not apply to the Parish Council, it would nevertheless publish information on its website to comply with the Transparency Code and the information to be published would be as follows:

- Annual publication of all expenditure transactions or a separate document giving expenditure transactions above £100.
- Publication of year end accounts according to the format included in the annual return form.
- Publication of the Annual Governance Statement.
- Publication of the Internal Audit Report.
- Procurement information
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.
- Salaries.

2. Information to be published on the Website for the 2022-23 Financial Year

2.1 Expenditure above £100.

April 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
08.04.2022	Lintz Mason. Printing 500 Love MSG Leaflets	£300.00
12.04.2022	Jo-Anne Garrick. NDP Professional Fees	£1,260.00
12.04.2022	Darlington Borough Council. Grounds Maintenance Contract. December 2021 to March, 2022	£1,842.41
12.04.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE April 2022 plus arrears back to 1 st April, 2021 as a result of the pay award	£356.20
29.04.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
29.04.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay including pay arrears back to 1 st April, 2021 as a result of the pay award	£1,430.39

May 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
10.05.2022	Eddie Bailey. Clearing brambles	£240.00
10.05.2022	Eddie Bailey. 50 bags of gravel for repairing steps on The Front	£180.00
10.05.2022	Councillor A. Marshall. Reimbursement for purchasing gravel for steps	£139.80
10.05.2022	Amberol Limited. Purchase of two self watering barrel planters	£1,044.48
10.05.2022	Gordon Fletcher. Internal Audit.	£125.00
10.05.2022	County Durham Association of Local Councils 2022-23 Subscription and Subscription to the NALC.	£605.33
10.05.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE May 2022	£185.80
11.05.2022	Middleton St. George Gardens and Allotments Association. Section 137 Grant. Annual Show	£100.00
29.05.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
29.05.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

June 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
14.06.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE June 2022	£185.80
14.06.2022	Mrs. J. Storey. Belle Vue Allotments Rent.	£125.00
14.06.2022	Dr. E. Peart. Killinghall Row Allotments Rent	£125.00
14.06.2022	Darlington Borough Council. Grounds Maintenance Contract April to June 2022	£1,423.26
14.06.2022	Arthur J. Gallagher. Insurance 2022-23	£1,628.99
14.06.2022	Westwood Timber. Two replacement fencing panels MUGA	£477.60
30.06.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
30.06.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

July 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
12.07.2022	MHS Countryside. Clearance and re-seeding of south facing bank side in the Water Park	£10,728.00
15.07.2022	CI Print. Printing NDP Referendum Leaflets	£220.00
15.07.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE July 2022	£185.80
18.07.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
18.07.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63
22.07.2022	Famous Flyers. NDP Referendum Leaflet Distribution	£315.00

August 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
01.08.2022	Darlington Borough Council. RoSPA Inspection Report	£122.40
01.08.2022	Westwood Timber. Three replacement MUGA fencing panels	£940.00
08.08.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE August 2022	£185.80
31.08.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
31.08.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

September, 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
13.09.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE September 2022	£185.80
13.09.2022	Darlington Borough Council. Ground Maintenance Contract July to September 2022	£1,423.26
13.09.2022	John Wade (Haulage) Ltd. Road and fully repair Water Park	£3,626.12
13.09.2022	Jo Anne Garrick. NDP Professional Fees	£1,000.00
13.09.2022	Mazars External Audit	£360.00
13.09.2022	Eddie Bailey. Clearance work round Pond 1 Water Park	£180.00
22.09.2022	Elliott Consultancy Limited. Woodland Management Project Tree Survey	£564.00
30.09.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
30.09.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

October, 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
11.10.2022	Middleton St. George Community Association. Section 137 Grant for the Magic Sparkle Event	£500.00
11.10.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE October 2022	£185.80
12.10.2022	Scottish Power Gas.	£431.38
28.10.2022	WEL Medical. Defibrillator Training Device	£431.94
29.10.2021	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
29.10.2021	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

November, 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
15.11.2022	Northumbria in Bloom. 2023 Entry Fee	£125.00
15.11.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE November 2022	£185.80
30.11.2022	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
30.11.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

December 2022

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
13.12.2022	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE December 2022 including arrears as a result of the pay award back to the 1 st April, 2022	£302.80
13.12.2022	Mrs. J. Storey. Belle Vue Allotments Rent.	£125.00
13.12.2022	Dr. E. Peart. Killinghall Row Allotments Rent	£125.00
13.12.2022	St. Teresa's Hospice. Section 137 Grant	£200.00
30.12.2021	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
30.12.2021	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

January 2023

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
10.01.2023	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE. January 2023	£198.80
10.01.2023	Streetscape. Play area repasirs from the RoSPA inspection report	£5,404.80
16.01.2023	Barclaycard Commercial. HP Laserjet Printer	£143.00
31.01.2023	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
31.01.2023	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

February 2023

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
14.02.2023	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE. February 2023	£198.80
14.02.2023	Amberol Limited. Two self watering barrel planters	£1,003.20
14.02.2023	Darlington Borough Council. Grounds Maintenance Contract October to December 2022	£1,423.26
27.02.2023	Kompan. Replacement parts for the accessible swing	£201.60
28.02.2023	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
28.02.2023	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

March 2023

Date	Payee Name and Payment Details	Amount
14.03.2023	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE. March 2023	£198.80
14.03.2023	Darlington Borough Council. Grounds Maintenance Contract January to March 2023	£1,423.26
14.03.2023	Eddie Bailey. Repair of stile and steps in the Water Park	£137.83
	printing of Love MSG leaflets	£300.00
31.03.2023	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn Pay	£613.70
31.03.2022	Clerk - A. W. Macnab Pay	£743.63

2.2 Publication of the Year End Accounts

Please see the Appendix 1 for the year end accounts.

2.3 Publication of the Annual Governance Statement

Please see Appendix 2 for the Annual Governance Statement

2.4 Publication of the Internal Audit Report.

Please see Appendix 3 for the Internal Audit Report

2.5 Procurement Information

The code requires that local authorities must publish details of every invitation to tender for contracts to provide goods and/or services with a value that exceeds £5,000.

The only invitation to tender which occurred in the 2022-23 financial year was for the Grounds Maintenance Contract for the 1st April, 2023 to 31st March 2026.

Only one tender was received for £6,079.59 which was accepted by the Parish Council on the 12th December, 2022

2.6 Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations

The following grants were made to:

Recipient	Amount
Litz Mason. Section 137 Grant. Love MSG Leaflets	£300.00
Middleton St. George Gardens and Allotments Association. Section 137 Grant. Annual Show	£100.00
Middleton St. George Community Association. Section 137 Grant for the Magic Sparkle Event	£500.00
St. Teresa's Hospice. Section 137 Grant	£200.00

2.7 Salaries

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The Clerk is paid on Spinal Column Point 22 £15.26 per hour of the National Joint Council's Salary Scales for Local Government Employees. He is contracted to work 15 hours each week. The calculation of his monthly working for payment purposes is 15 hours per week x 52.143 weeks each year = 782.145 hours each year divided by 12 months = 65.178 hours per month.

The clerk's pay is calculated as follows

Gross Pay	20% Deduction for PAYE	Net Pay
Monthly - £15.26 per hour x 65.178 hours per month = £994.61.	£198.80	£795.81

Gross Pay	20% Deduction for PAYE	Net Pay
Annual - £11,935.32	£2,385.60	£9,549.72

Litter Picker.

The Litter Picker is paid on the National Minimum Wage for Adults which increased from £9.50 to £10.42 per hour on the 1st April, 2023.

The Litter Picker is contracted to work 68 hours each month. There are no deductions for tax and national insurance. The Litter Picker contributes 5% of his gross pay to his pension which is reduced by 5% tax relief. The Parish Council contributes 3% of his gross pay towards his pension. The payments are made to the NEST Pension Scheme monthly.

Gross Pay	5% Deduction for Pension	Net Pay
Monthly - £10.42 x 68 hours = £708.56	£35.43	£673.13
Annual - £8,502.72	£425.16	£8,077.56

Cleaner

The Cleaner is paid on the basis of the National Minimum Wage for Adults which increased from £9.50 to £10.42 per hour.

The Cleaner works 2 hours each week. The calculation of her hours worked each month is 2 hours x 52.142 weeks = 104.284 divided by 12 months = 8.69 hours each month. There are no deductions for tax and national insurance. The Cleaner contributes 5% of her gross pay to her pension which is reduced by 5% tax relief. The Parish Council contributes 3% of her gross pay towards his pension. The payments are made to the NEST Pension Scheme monthly.

Gross Pay	5% Deduction for Pension	Net Pay
Monthly - £10.42 x 8.69 hours each month = £90.55	£4.53	£86.02
Annual - £1,086.60	£54.36	£1,032.24

Alan Macnab
Clerk to the Parish Council.

5th June, 2023

APPENDIX 1 YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2022-23

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Middleton St. George Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	124,693	136,006	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 1 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	48,390	50,809	Total amount of precept (or for ICDs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	27,580	16,677	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	18,605	21,710	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employee NI contributions, employer 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	46,052	42,861	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	136,006	138,921	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	136,006	138,921	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	180,061	185,919	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 PWLS).
For Local Councils Only			
	Yes	No	N/A
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓	
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓

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

Date

An V M
20/04/2023

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

22/05/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

2219

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

Robert M Bullock

APPENDIX 2 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022-23

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Middleton St. George 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		Has meant that the authority:
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during this year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	prepared its accounting statements in accordance with its Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintain an adequate system of internal control (including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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 expertise of external auditors in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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 authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	discussed 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 responsibility for the funds/assets, including the total reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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:

22/05/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

2219

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

Chairman

Hazel T Bullock

Clerk

Am W Munn

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APPENDIX 3 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022-23

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Middleton St. George Parish Council

www.middleton-st-george.org.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, 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 2022/23 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 the 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. The authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly varied; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Asset and Investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR for "not covered")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the date set).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. (For local councils only)			
Trust funds (including charities) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

04/05/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

GORDON FLETCHER (C.M.B.A.)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

G. Fletcher

Date

07/05/2023

*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).

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – 2022/2023

MIDDLETON ST GEORGE PARISH COUNCIL

1. Background

- 1.1. Following the abolition of the Audit Commission a new organisation has been established which is responsible for issuing proper practices in relation to the accounts of smaller authorities. It is called the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Board (SAPPB), and is made up of members of the SLCC, NALC, CIPFA, the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG), the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the National Audit Office and a representative of the external audit firms appointed to smaller authorities
- 1.2. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,0000 must complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) at the end of each financial year. The AGAR is made of 3 sections along with an annual internal audit report. which is to be completed by the Parish Council's independent internal auditor, who is to give an opinion of the Council's internal controls.
- 1.3. CDALC have provided Councils with an internal audit checklist to be used, this annual audit uses this list as the minimum of the tests to be carried out.

2. Objectives of the Audit

- 2.1. To examine the system of internal controls to ensure that the Parish Council may obtain an adequate level of assurance for its activities.

3. Scope of the Internal Audit work and the areas examined.

- 3.1 The Scope of Work covers the key control objectives identified in the AGAR for Internal Audit.
- 3.2. To properly complete the audit the following areas of activity have been examined and tested by the Internal Auditor:
 - Payroll
 - Creditors
 - Risk Management
 - Income collection and Banking arrangements
 - Petty cash (none)
 - Assets
 - Debtors
 - Budgetary Control (including year end procedures)
 - Exercise of public rights for 2021/22
- 3.3. The audit findings of this report have been discussed with the Clerk of the Council and any audit recommendations have been agreed with him. Many thanks to him for his help during this audit.

4. Findings

4.1. Payroll

- 4.1.1 The Parish Council has 3 paid employees, the Parish Clerk, Cleaner and a Litter Picker. A contribution for the Litter Picker payments is made by Darlington Borough Council.
- 4.1.2. Timesheets are completed for the Cleaner and Litter picker and are approved by The Parish Clerk. I have examined the payroll amounts for the financial year 2022/2023 and all payments have been properly completed and approved and have been correctly paid.
- 4.1.3. The salary and grade of the Clerk are determined by the Parish Council based on nationally determine grades and salary scales by the NJC for the Local Government Service. The salary of the litter picker is based on the National Minimum wage. Wages of the Cleaner was previously set and approved by the Council. (now National Minimum Wage). The salaries budget is reviewed annually by the Finance Committee.

4.2. Creditors (Accounts Payable)

- 4.2.1 There are no separation of duties regarding Finance and Administration at Middleton St George Parish Council as the Clerk is the Officer responsible (RFO). Compensating checks are carried out by the Chair and Members, who have the opportunity to examine all the accounts for payment.
- 4.2.2. Financial Regulations 5.3. state that "All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure approved by the council" All payments are authorized at the Parish Council meeting (following confirmation from the Finance committee) and this is recorded on the invoice along with the payment date.
- 4.2.3. All Section 137 payments had been agreed by the Council prior to payment being made.
- 4.2.4. The Council does not hold petty cash, but the Clerk can be reimbursed for small items of expenditure, through the creditors system, on authorization from the Chair.
- 4.2.5 The Council also holds a Barclay Card for small items of expenditure or purchases on-line, which is well controlled, with the above creditor's checks applied.

4.3. Risk Management/Governance Arrangements

- 4.3.1. To help the Council achieve its objectives, the Council has set up Timetable of Controls which is an important document list, to ensure good internal checks are carried out throughout the year which is reported monthly to the Council.
- 4.3.2. The Council reviews its risk assessments annually and updated throughout the year when required, and the Risk management Policy and risk assessment was reviewed by the Finance Committee and agreed by Council on 13th June 2022.
- 4.3.3. All policies are reviewed through the Policy and Procedure committee who have a timetable when policies are to be reviewed.
- 4.3.4 Council governance has also been improved with the appointment of the independent Internal Auditor who gives assurance on the Council's activities, and also with the formation of a Finance Committee.
- 4.3.5 Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were reviewed and approved during the year and throughout the year when necessary.
- 4.3.6. Detailed Effectiveness of internal Control and Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 reports were reviewed at the 6th March 2023 Finance Committee (approved at Council meeting 13th March 2023).
- 4.3.7. The announcement of the public rights for 2021/2022 was dated 23rd May 2022 with the inspection of the accounts available between 1st June to 14th July 2022.

4.4. Income collection and Banking arrangements

- 4.4.1. Financial Regulations of the Council state that all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of the RFO (Clerk).
- 4.4.2. Internal Audit examined all the income records for the year and confirmed that all income had been properly collected, promptly banked and properly recorded.
- 4.4.3. The Council has 4 bank accounts:
 - Barclays Community account
 - 2 Barclays saver accounts
 - savings accounts with the credit union account where money is held for specific purposes and earns interest.
- 4.4.4. I confirmed the reconciled bank statements at the end of the year to the Income and Expenditure records.

4.4.5. Vat is claimed back every quarter and these records were confirmed and income received.

4.5. Accounting Records

4.5.1. All income and expenditure are recorded on a spreadsheet with reference numbers providing a good audit trail. This allows the Clerk to carry out effective bank reconciliations, which are reported monthly to the Council.

4.5.2 Bank reconciliations had been properly completed each month with no outstanding issues. Any income and expenditure not properly recorded in the accounts would be identified here, Bank reconciliations are verified as stated in the Financial Regulations.

4.6. Assets

4.6.1. The Assets Register was updated at the 3rd October 2022 Finance Meeting and will be reviewed and included with the Statement of accounts for 2022/23.

4.7. Debtors

4.7.1. There are no accounts raised for debts, as debtors either pay by cash or a cheque is received for work/service carried out.

4.8. Budgetary Control

4.8.1. The Clerk completes monthly financial reports to the Finance Committee (approved by Council) which includes income and expenditure reports and shows progress against the budget.

4.8.2. Financial Regulations (Paragraph 3.1) state that the Council should have a 3-year forecast of revenue and capital, income and expenditure, and also identify allocated and unallocated reserves (paragraph 3.2.). This is being carried out by the Finance Committee where future projects were discussed.

4.8.3. The Council approved budgets and reserves during the budget setting process, where the precept is agreed, and the request submitted by the deadline dictated by the Borough Council.

4.8.4. Budget setting and precept for 2023/24 and the next 2 years budgets were discussed at the Finance Meeting on 9th September 2022, 3rd October 2022 and 7th November 2022 which were agreed by Council on 14th November 2022.

4.8.5. The Finance committee (approved by Council) meets monthly (except August) to monitor the budget against actual income and expenditure from reports provided by the Clerk.

5. Recommendations.

5.1. There are no recommendations

Gordon Fletcher (C.M.I.I.A.)

Internal Auditor to the Council

Date: 7th May 2023

