

## OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Personnel Committee Terms of Reference were adopted by Full Council at its Annual Meeting held 9 May 2022

(Reviewed 9 May 2023 ~~and~~ 13 May 2024 and 12 May 2025)

#### Membership

- Membership of the Committee is five councillors
- Membership of the Committee shall be determined at the Annual Meeting of the Council
- The Committee shall appoint a Chair by election from members of the Committee at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting
- Substitute members may be nominated and appointed to take the place of an ordinary member who cannot attend and without whom the meeting would be inquorate.
- The Committee is to comprise only of councillors

#### Quorum

The quorum of the Committee shall be three councillors.

#### Frequency of Meetings

One meeting will be held every year to review Clerk's performance, staff contracts, job descriptions and HR policies. Otherwise meetings will be convened as and when necessary e.g. to deal with grievance or disciplinary matters or to deal with other emerging personnel issues.

#### Meeting Duration

A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours. In exceptional circumstances the meeting may be extended with a vote taken by members.

#### Notice of Meeting

The Clerk will call a meeting of the Committee at such time as agreed by the Committee Chair and publish the agenda following standard Council practice.

#### Admission of the Public and Press

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public may be excluded from these meetings if their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Exclusion will be by resolution giving reason for that exclusion.

## Minutes of the Meeting

All minutes of the Committee shall be minuted by the Clerk and the minutes agreed by the Committee at its next meeting. The minutes shall then be published according to standard Council practice. Draft minutes may be published with the agreement of the Committee, so long as it is clearly indicated that they are draft and could be subject to change at a later date.

## Delegated Powers

**General:** Members will be advised by the Clerk whether or not a particular item under discussion is within the Committee's delegated powers. If it is within delegated powers, the minutes will record the decision as RESOLVED. If not, then the minutes will record the decision as RECOMMENDED and it will then be brought to the attention of Full Council when seeking approval and adoption of the Committee minutes

### The Personnel Committee has delegated authority to:

- Review annually contracts of employment, job descriptions and personal specifications for employees and make recommendations to Full Council
- Review all Council policies that relate to staff employment on an annual basis
- Supervise and performance manage the Clerk's work
- Appoint (from its membership) two members to conduct Clerk's annual appraisal
- Review employee salaries and make recommendations to Full Council on remuneration
- Receive notification from the Clerk of his/her absence in the event of illness or other reason (in accordance with Standing Order 19)
- Administer the Clerk's leave requests
- To appoint members to act as a disciplinary panel
- To appoint members to act as an appeals panel in the case of any appeal against disciplinary action
- To appoint members to hear any formal grievance
- Review health and safety at work for all Council employees
- To form a recruitment panel when necessary and make recommendations to Full Council on appointments. Recruitment panels will normally consist of at least 3 members plus the Clerk.
- Be the focal point for all employee issues and consider and make recommendations to Full Council on any employee-related issue
- Ensure the Council complies with all legislative requirements relating to employment law

## Confidentiality

All members must preserve confidentiality of all individual employee matters.

It should be noted that much of the work conducted by this committee will by its very nature, be confidential and the public will normally be excluded by resolution at the commencement of the meetings as it is deemed to be prejudicial to the public interest.

# Rabbits: management options for preventing damage

The European rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* has once again established itself as the major vertebrate pest of British agriculture, causing economic losses estimated to be in excess of £100 million annually. The total winter population is estimated to be at 35% to 40% of the pre-myxomatosis level (circa 1952) and is increasing by about 2% annually. This is due primarily to the reduced effect of myxomatosis, resulting from increased levels of genetic resistance. Given the problems associated with rabbits, this increase in numbers is likely to be accompanied by a corresponding rise in the amount of serious crop damage reported. It is essential, therefore, that effective control strategies are available to ensure that crops vulnerable to rabbit damage are adequately protected. This will serve to benefit landowners and occupiers who have a statutory responsibility to manage rabbit infestations on their land and to prevent them causing damage to neighbouring properties.

## Damage

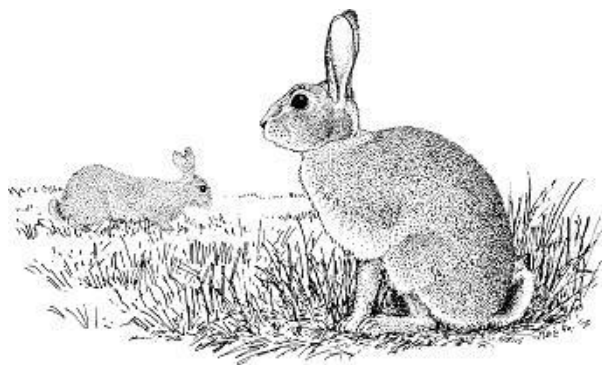
### Cereals

It is estimated that farmers are losing about £50 million per annum as a consequence of rabbit damage to cereals. Winter wheat, barley and oats appear to be most vulnerable. Rye and triticale suffer smaller losses and spring barley appears to be the least susceptible to rabbit damage. In terms of annual yield, a loss of 1% per rabbit per hectare (2.5 acres) has been recorded for winter wheat and 0.33% per rabbit per hectare for spring barley.

The effects of grazing on winter cereals are most obvious during the winter, when plant growth is slow, and become less apparent when crops grow more rapidly in the spring.

In fact, by harvest, plants grazed by as many as 20 rabbits per hectare can be the same height as plants that have never been grazed. Yields, however, can be reduced by about 20%.

This clearly illustrates not only the scale of the problem but also the difficulties in accurately assessing the impact of grazing.



Rabbits

### Grassland

The effect of rabbit grazing on pasture is less obvious than on cereals. Grazing of newly sown grassland may result in poor establishment or complete failure of the sward. Over-winter grazing of established grassland reduces early grass that is needed in the spring. Yields of crops cut later for silage or hay may also be substantially reduced.

Continuous grazing soon reduces the vigour of species such as Italian ryegrass or meadow fescue.

## Rabbits: management options for preventing damage

Permanent grass on good soils is better able to withstand close defoliation, but grazing by large numbers of rabbits can weaken or kill even persistent leafy ryegrass. Scratching and burrowing can degrade pasture still further by encouraging the establishment of weeds such as nettles, thistles and ragwort. In terms of annual yield, recent studies have indicated the loss to be almost 1% per rabbit per hectare.

### Other crops

Rabbit damage has been recorded to a wide range of crops in Britain. Besides cereals and grassland, some of the most important include roots, brassicas and market garden crops, which can all suffer severe damage, both to the growing plants and the marketable end product.

### Trees

Rabbits can damage or kill planted nursery stock and young trees of many species. Damage to the bark of large trees can also be serious and semi-mature hedgerows may also be vulnerable. In extreme circumstances, rabbits may prevent natural regeneration in woodlands. Damage ranges from the eating of young seedlings to the destruction of leading shoots, the browsing of branches and removal of bark. The burrowing activities of rabbits can also undermine root systems.

### Damage to archaeological sites, monuments and landscapes

Animal burrowing on archaeological sites results in the disturbance and sometimes destruction of artefacts, ecofacts and buried land surfaces. It also leads to the destabilisation of monuments, which in turn can lead to an altering of a monuments profile. Damage by burrowing should be prevented or avoided because our archaeological resource is finite and contains irreplaceable information that is important to the study of the human past.

### Management

Rabbit populations can withstand high mortality from natural causes, therefore control efforts must add to, and not merely replace, these causes if direct control is to be effective.

Because of the size of the effort required, and the rabbit's inherent capacity for population increase, complete eradication is impractical.

Instead the aim should be to reduce rabbit numbers to levels at which the damage they cause is economically acceptable. Where access can be gained to burrows, gassing - accompanied by careful habitat management to reduce rabbit harbourage, if necessary - is the most effective method of control. In some situations, other techniques may be appropriate.

The most effective time for control is from November to March, although earlier action may be needed on autumn cereals showing signs of heavy grazing. There are four main reasons for this recommendation:

- Mortality from natural causes will have reduced rabbit numbers to their lowest level by the winter. Up to 90% of young rabbits born during the summer will have died by this time without human intervention.
- Action at this time will reduce the adult breeding population before the next breeding season begins. Each doe killed during this period can mean at least 20 fewer young rabbits born next summer.
- Reduction of numbers during this period will reduce damage to vulnerable autumn sown crops.
- Vegetation is dying back, making access to burrows easier.

More effective results will be achieved if adjoining land is treated at the same time in a co-operative exercise. Rabbits do not respect boundaries, and joint action will remove animals that use burrows on one holding and feed on another. Control over a substantial block of land will also reduce the rate of re-infestation.

The quality and amount of harbourage are major factors that can determine the number of rabbits in a particular area. Habitat management should therefore play an integral part of any successful rabbit control programme. Scrub and ground cover may need to be thinned sufficiently to give access to all burrows; this is essential where gassing is planned. Also, where practicable,

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burrow systems should be destroyed following control operations.

Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise damage to other wildlife and habitats. For example, scrub clearance should be avoided during the bird-nesting season.

### Legal considerations

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to intentionally inflict unnecessary suffering, as specified by the Act, on any wild mammal. This legislation may need to be considered where the destruction of occupied warrens and burrow systems is being contemplated.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 a rabbit becomes a Protected Animal once it is caught in a trap or snare, making it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering. Traps and snares should therefore be inspected at least once and preferably twice a day and, wherever possible, be placed where the trapped animal will not be exposed to extremes of weather.

Under Section 12 of the Pests Act 1954, it is an offence to knowingly spread myxomatosis to uninfected rabbits. The Specified Animal Pathogens Order 1998 (S.I. 1998/463) prohibits the introduction into an animal of the live virus causing viral haemorrhagic disease (VHD) of rabbits, except where such introduction is undertaken under the authority of a licence. These prohibitions mean that the deliberate spreading of myxomatosis or VHD cannot be used as a legal method of controlling rabbits.

An Order has been made under Section 1 of the Pests Act 1954 by which England and Wales (except for the City of London, the Isles of Scilly and Skokholm Island) have been designated a Rabbit Clearance Area. In this area, every occupier of land is responsible for the killing or taking of wild rabbits on his land. Where it is not reasonably practical to destroy the rabbits, occupiers must take the necessary steps to prevent them causing damage.

Under section 98 of the Agricultural Act 1947, Defra has the power to serve a Notice under the Agriculture Act 1947, requiring rabbit control to

be carried out; if this is not done, they may arrange for the necessary work to be undertaken at the expense of the occupier, who could also be liable to a fine.

To help manage infestations, the Ground Game Act 1880 gives every occupier of land a limited right to kill and take rabbits and hares concurrently with the right of any other person entitled to do so on the same land. An occupier may use any legal method to kill rabbits and should ensure that they comply with other legislative controls on the methods of killing and taking animals, the most relevant of which are discussed further below.

The occupier may, in writing, authorise other persons to assist him, however only he and one other person authorised by him are entitled to kill using a firearm. The Ground Game Act 1880 exempts an occupier, and persons authorised by him, from the need to hold a game licence when killing or taking rabbits on the occupier's land.

Monuments that are being damaged by burrowing animals may be Scheduled. Any proposals to control rabbits on Scheduled Monuments should be discussed with English Heritage before work starts, to determine whether Scheduled Monument Consent is required.

### Control methods: gassing

Gassing is the most effective method of reducing rabbit numbers where burrows are accessible. When correctly used, under the right conditions, gassing can reduce the rabbit population by up to 80%. However, effectiveness decreases in porous soils, when soil moisture is low and also when air temperatures fall below 5 °C. For best results, it is essential to drive rabbits to ground before gassing and to find and treat every entrance to the warren system.

On monuments and archaeological sites the soil used for closing up burrow holes should be brought in from off-site as any further digging on site will further damage the monument and add to its disfigurement. On Scheduled Monuments this should have already been agreed with



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English Heritage as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent.

Selective scrub clearance may be necessary to gain access to burrows. Before embarking on a gassing programme, particular attention should be paid to the possible presence of badger setts, as it is illegal to gas badgers. Care should also be taken to avoid gassing fox earths, as no fumigant is approved for use against foxes. Burrows in or around badger setts and fox earths must not therefore be treated. The impact on other wildlife living in burrows, for example adders, may also need to be considered.

Since the withdrawal of Cymag as a vertebrate control agent, the only commercially available fumigants are formulations that generate phosphine gas on contact with moisture. These are available either in tablet or pellet form.

All fumigants must be approved under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and must be used according to label instructions.

Gassing should only be undertaken by persons trained in the use of aluminium phosphide, and familiar with the precautionary measures to be observed. Fumigants can be lethal to humans and it is essential that users follow the instructions on safety aspects.

Users should be aware of the need to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002/2677), in respect both of its general provisions and those which relate specifically to fumigations. Further guidance is provided in the Health and Safety Executive Agriculture Information Sheet No. 22 Gassing of rabbits and vertebrate pests (see Further information).

### Use of phosphine

The only available phosphine generating formulations are Phostoxin and Talunex. Both are extremely toxic to rabbits with inhalation resulting in rapid death.

Phostoxin is formulated as a spherical 3 gram tablet and can be introduced into the burrow system either by hand (protected by suitable gloves) or via an applicator. One tablet should

be inserted into each hole. This should then be sealed with a piece of turf, grass side downwards. Care must be taken not to drop soil onto the tablet.

Talunex consists of 0.6 gram pellets that are injected into the burrow system using a Topex applicator, specifically designed for use with this product. The system has the advantage of minimising operator exposure to the formulation. Treatment of infested areas should be the same as with Phostoxin, with the exception that 4 or 5 pellets should be introduced into each hole.

### Follow-up action

The effectiveness of all gassing treatments should be monitored by inspecting treated areas for signs of fresh activity 48 hours after the initial treatment. In many situations, a follow-up treatment of re-opened holes will be necessary. Ideally, the procedure should be repeated until no re-opened burrows are found.

### Control methods: fencing

Fencing is a particularly useful management tool where the nature of the rabbit harbourage makes other techniques impractical, or when complete exclusion is the aim. In many situations, fencing can be more cost-effective than control methods that have to be undertaken year after year. Traditionally, permanent wire-netting fences have been used to deny rabbits access to vulnerable areas but more recently, temporary electric fences, either netting or multi-strand wire systems, have become popular methods of crop protection.

When correctly erected and maintained, wire-netting and electric fences can reduce rabbit numbers on protected fields by 85% to 90%, and both have a useful life of about ten years. Electric fencing is cheaper to purchase and erect than wire-netting, but its maintenance costs are higher.

### Wire-netting

Netting fences should be constructed of 18 gauge, 31 mm (1 1/4 in) hexagonal mesh. They should be a minimum of 750 mm (2 ft 6 in) high with a further 150 mm (6 in) lapped on the surface of the ground towards the rabbit

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harbourage. Turfs of grass should be placed on the lapped netting at 1 m (about 1 yard) intervals to hold it firmly in place (vegetation should later grow through the mesh to complete this job). The netting should be attached to two 2.65 mm (1/8 in) high tensile spring steel straining wires (one at the bottom of the fence and one at the top) with galvanised fence rings. The straining wires should be supported by wooden stakes 1.8 m (5 ft 11 in) x 80 mm (3 in). The stakes can be placed up to 15 m (48 ft 9 in) apart although ground undulations may dictate closer spacing. End posts 2 m (6 ft 6 in) x 100 mm (4 in) braced by struts 2 m (6 ft 6 in) x 80 mm (3 in) should be placed at the ends of the fence and at bends.

Local site conditions or other considerations may demand a variation to these specifications. For example, particular attention should be paid to the presence of potential weak spots such as uneven ground, dry stone-walls and watercourses. In areas such as young farm woodlands, where it is especially important to prevent invasion by rabbits, the fence specification can be improved by projecting the top 150 mm (6 in) of the fence outwards at 45° towards the harbourage. It is recommended that any proposed changes to the specification are first discussed with one of Natural England's Wildlife Management Advisers (see *Further information*).

Ideally, wire-netting fences should be erected to surround fully the area to be protected. If this is not practical, a strip fence, which extends at least 150 m beyond either end of the problem area, may be used.

The number of gates in a fence should be kept to a minimum because they make maintenance more difficult. They should be hung on supports independent of fence straining posts, as the latter will inevitably move and so affect the hang of the gates. A wooden sill must be dug into the ground to prevent burrowing underneath, and gates should shut against a post. Badger gates should be installed in the netting if the fence crosses any badger tracks or paths.

An advisory leaflet, describing the design and installation of badger gates in rabbit-proof

fencing (TIN026) is available (see under *Further information*).

Regular monthly inspections and maintenance of fences are essential to block burrows dug under the fences and to repair damage caused by farm machinery, fallen tree branches and vegetation. This safeguards the long-term effectiveness of the fence.

### Electric fences

There are two types of electric fence in common use: netting and strained-wire. Both have been shown to be as effective as wire-netting fences.

Electric-netting fences are available in a number of commercial designs. Basically, they all consist of a heavy-duty polythene twine mesh in which the horizontal strands are interwoven with electrically conductive stainless steel wire. To prevent shorting, the steel wires are omitted from the bottom strand. They are between 0.5 to 0.75 m (1 ft 8 in to 2 ft 5 in) high and are supplied in 25 m (82 ft) or 50 m (164 ft) rolls in which the fence posts are already fitted. This type of fence is very quick and easy to erect and take down.

The electric strained-wire system consists of seven parallel electrified conducting wires (7-strand, 16 gauge medium tensile mild steel) at heights of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 40 cm (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 16 in) above the ground. The lowest wire is earthed and the remaining six are live (a small length of wire should be wound around each of the top six wires to electrically connect them). Adjustable plastic insulators supported on metal stakes hold the wires. The stakes can be placed up to 7 m apart (about 8 yards), although ground undulations may dictate closer spacing. Where the fence line bends, anchor posts replace the normal metal stakes. The whole system is tensioned at a reel post placed at the end of the fence.

Both electric fence types must be powered by an energiser capable of producing an output of at least 1 joule when measured into a 500 ohm resistance. Most mains-operated energisers, and the more powerful battery-powered units, have this capability. Batteries should be

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changed regularly (a fully charged 70 Ah battery will need to be changed every 2 to 3 weeks). A wide range of energisers is available and users are advised to discuss specific requirements with their supplier. To effectively deter rabbits, it is important to maintain a minimum of 2.5 kV throughout the fenceline. A good earthing system is essential to achieve this.

Ideally, as for wire-netting fences, electric fences should be erected to surround fully the area to be protected. If this is not practical a strip fence, which extends at least 150 m beyond either end of the problem area, may be used. Prior to erection, a 450 mm to 600 mm (1 ft 6 in to 2 ft) wide strip should be mown along the fence line or the vegetation killed off using an approved herbicide. This ensures that the conducting wires are kept clear of vegetation that would otherwise short-circuit the system thereby draining power and reducing effectiveness. Initially, fences should be inspected every few days but this can later be extended to 2 to 3 week intervals.

A more detailed advisory leaflet on the use of fencing (TIN023) is available (see *Further information*).

### Lethal control methods

#### Shooting

Shooting is a popular method of rabbit control and is most effective when conducted at night, using a spotlight.

The Ground Game Act 1880 gives an occupier the right to shoot rabbits on his land during the day and to authorise in writing one other person to do so. The person must be a member of the occupier's household or staff or be employed for reward. Under the Pests Act 1954, an occupier may apply to Natural England for authority to use a reasonable number of extra guns, if the owner of the shooting rights will neither permit the occupier to bring on extra guns, nor undertake to destroy the rabbits himself, and it is necessary to use more guns than the occupier has the right to authorise.

Under the Ground Game Act 1880 as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the following are allowed to shoot at night:

- An owner-occupier with shooting rights.
- A landlord who has reserved his shooting rights.
- A shooting tenant not in occupation who has derived his shooting rights from the owner.
- An occupier or one other person authorised by him provided he has written authority from another person with shooting rights.

The Firearms Act 1968 requires any person possessing, purchasing or acquiring a shotgun to obtain a shotgun certificate from the police. A firearms certificate is required for rifle use.

Single shooting operations are not particularly effective and reduce rabbit numbers by only about 30%. The technique should only be used therefore as an adjunct to more effective control methods or to remove problem individuals that cannot be disposed of by other means. Shooting also tends to target adult males and therefore has a relatively limited effect on the breeding potential of the population the following spring unless considerable time and effort are expended.

#### Baited cage trapping

This technique involves the live capture of wild rabbits in galvanised wire-mesh cages baited with carrot. The technique can be used throughout the year, but is most effective at catching adult rabbits during the winter. Additional benefits are that the technique does not require access to burrows and non-target species can be released unharmed.

The traps should be set in short open vegetation and checked twice a day, early morning and late afternoon. Captured rabbits must be dispatched humanely. Cage trapping has been shown to reduce numbers by about 65% and is most appropriate for protecting high value crops where manpower is available for frequent checking of traps. A detailed advisory leaflet on the use of cage trapping is available from Natural England (see under *Further information*).



## Rabbits: management options for preventing damage

### Drop box trapping

Drop boxes are designed to be used in conjunction with wire-mesh netting. A tunnel is either inserted into the fence line at right angles or placed parallel to the netting on the harbourage side of the barrier. Rabbits are caught when they enter the tunnel and fall through a hinged flap into a box that has been buried in the ground. The lid returns to place by means of a counter balance weight fixed to it.

Drop box traps should be visited at least once a day, when set, preferably early in the mornings. Captured rabbits must be despatched humanely. Traps should not be installed where they may be at risk from flooding. Permanently sited traps can be an effective method of capturing rabbits where fences are newly erected and where rabbits are passing through holes in established fences.

### Spring trapping

Under the Pests Act 1954 only approved spring traps, designed to catch and kill rabbits humanely, may be used. Those currently approved by the Spring Traps Approval Order 1995 are the Imbra Trap Mark I and Mark II, Juby Trap, Fenn Rabbit Trap Mark I, Fenn Vermin Trap Mark VI (Dual Purpose), Springer No. 6 (Multi Purpose), Victor Conibear 120-2, BMI Magnum 116, and clones of any of these listed spring traps.

Spring traps generally consist of a pair of clamps that are triggered to catch rabbits that step onto a plate mechanism. The traps should be set firmly in position with the treadle plate flush with the floor. The plate should be concealed by covering lightly with soil. To minimise the risk to non-target species, stock and pets should be excluded from the trapping area and the traps must be set only within the overhang of natural or artificial tunnels.

The Protection of Animals Act 1911 requires that all spring traps set for the purpose of catching rabbits (or hares) should be inspected at reasonable intervals and at least once every day between sunrise and sunset.

### Snaring

Snares are intended for use to tether animals for subsequent humane despatch. They are made from stranded brass wires that run freely through a small eye made in one end of the wire. The looped end of the wire (100 mm (4 in) diameter), into which the animal places its head, is positioned about 90 mm (3 in), above the ground using a short, notched stick (the 'pricker' or 'teeler'). The free end of the wire is securely tethered by a strong rot-proof cord to a peg, which is driven firmly into the ground. This prevents captured animals from escaping. Snares with a 'stop' or knot about 140 mm (5 in) from the eye can be used. The 'stop' prevents the loop from closing fully, thus ensuring the snare tethers rather than kills the rabbit. Snares should be set on well-used rabbit runs, in short vegetation, close to the harbourage from which rabbits are gaining access to crops. Where rabbits are numerous, the use of well-placed snares can catch animals quickly and efficiently, but results are poor during dry weather and frost.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 prohibits the use of self-locking snares and requires free-running snares to be inspected daily. All reasonable precautions should be taken to avoid catching non-target animals. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is illegal to set a snare to catch certain animals, such as badgers and otters. Under the Deer Act 1991 it is an offence to use snares to kill or take deer. It is recommended that they are inspected at dawn and dusk, and that they are not set where livestock are present or if there is a risk to domestic pets.

### Ferreting

This involves the introduction of ferrets into the burrow system. The ferrets drive rabbits into nets, which are placed over the burrow entrances or to waiting guns that shoot them as they bolt from tunnel entrances. Ferreting is most successful outside of the breeding season and, having the advantage of capturing more females than males, may serve as a valuable technique for dealing with intransigent populations. However, the method is time consuming and, when used in isolation, is

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unlikely to produce effective control of rabbit infestations.

### Damage reduction methods

#### Tree-guards

Individual tree guards and shelters can be used to protect young trees and shrubs from rabbit browsing and bark stripping where it is impractical or uneconomic to enclose them with fencing. There are many types available including plastic net guards, split plastic tubes, spiral plastic sleeves and welded mesh cylinders. Spiral plastic sleeves are perhaps the least successful because they tend to be displaced by wind or animals. The effectiveness of split plastic sleeves and net guards is greater because they are more robust. To effectively reduce rabbit damage tree guards should be at least 60 cm (2 ft) high.

#### Repellents

The use of repellents can be expensive, and does not always provide long-term protection from attack by rabbits. Any benefit they can provide is often offset when, as is often the case, repeated applications are necessary. Their use should therefore be restricted to small plantations or to areas that cannot be protected in any other way. Only repellents approved under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 may be used. Users must comply fully with the label instructions.

### Further information

In England further advice on dealing with rabbit problems, as well as problems caused by other

mammals and birds can be obtained by contacting Wildlife Management and Licensing at: Natural England, Wildlife Licensing Unit, First Floor, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6EB

Tel: 0845 601 4523 (local rate). Email: [wildlife@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:wildlife@naturalengland.org.uk)

A range of leaflets on wildlife topics is available online [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk). In particular see:

- TIN023: *Rabbits: use of fencing to prevent agricultural damage*
- TIN024: *Rabbits: use of cage-trapping to prevent agricultural damage*
- TIN026 : *Badger gates in rabbit-proof fencing*

The Forestry Commission produces a number of publications and these can be obtained from Publication Section, Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LH. Tel: 01420 23337.

The Health and Safety Executive Agriculture Information Sheet No. 22 Gassing of rabbits and vertebrate pests is available via their Infoline (Tel: 08701 545500) or online at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais22.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais22.pdf)

This leaflet was produced by Natural England and the Central Science Laboratory, now known as the Food and Environmental Research Agency (FERA).

# Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

|                                 | RECEIPTS   | PAYMENTS  |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Opening Balance                 |            |           |
| Balance at Bank                 | 118,201.49 |           |
| Cash in Hand                    |            |           |
| Salary (Inc Tax and NI)         |            | 15,068.68 |
| Pension                         |            | 1,948.36  |
| Expenses                        |            |           |
| Grounds Maintenance             |            | 3,451.97  |
| Cemetery                        |            | 1,660.00  |
| Training                        |            | 75.00     |
| Insurance                       |            | 2,359.44  |
| Youth Work                      |            | 8,569.00  |
| Pavilion                        |            | 3,621.57  |
| MUGA                            |            | 52,567.87 |
| Audit                           |            | 605.00    |
| Journal                         |            |           |
| Trees                           |            | 2,625.00  |
| Street Lighting                 |            | 373.86    |
| Highways                        |            |           |
| Subscriptions                   |            | 1,197.81  |
| Allowances                      |            | 200.00    |
| Community Grants                |            | 735.98    |
| Extra Grounds Maintenance       |            | 668.40    |
| Stocks Green                    |            |           |
| Flood Mitigation                |            |           |
| Caretaker Duties                |            |           |
| Play Area                       |            | 2,403.39  |
| Orchards                        |            | 1,336.89  |
| Website                         |            | 418.13    |
| Accounting Software             |            | 345.60    |
| Planted containers              |            | 475.00    |
| Section 106/Open Spaces Project |            |           |
| Precept                         | 69,130.00  |           |
| Interest                        | 1,599.14   |           |
| Cemetery                        | 870.00     |           |
| Miscellaneous                   | 250.00     |           |
| General Admin                   |            | 598.37    |
| VAT                             |            |           |
| Sign Boards                     |            |           |
| Drainage works                  |            |           |
| Donations                       |            |           |
| Election                        |            |           |
| Bus Shelters                    |            |           |

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council  
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

|                                | RECEIPTS   | PAYMENTS   |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Pavilion & MUGA (Sinking fund) |            |            |
| Grants                         | 22,728.00  |            |
| Open Spaces Project            |            |            |
| Bins                           |            |            |
| Property                       |            |            |
| Bus Shelters                   |            |            |
| S106-Indoor Community Facility |            |            |
| EAG Information Boards         |            |            |
| Pavilion & MUGA maintenance    |            |            |
| Biodiversity projects          |            |            |
| VAT                            | 13,478.75  | 13,998.69  |
|                                | 108,055.89 | 115,304.01 |
| Closing Balances:              |            |            |
| Balances in Bank Account       |            | 110,953.37 |
| Cash in Hand                   |            |            |
| TOTAL                          | 226,257.38 | 226,257.38 |

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2025

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Financial Officer

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council  
BALANCE SHEET  
31/03/2025

| (Last) Year Ended<br>31 Mar 2024 |   | (Current) Year Ended<br>31 Mar 2025 |  |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| £                                |   | £                                   |  |
|                                  | <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>                         |                                     |  |
|                                  | Stocks and stores                             |                                     |  |
|                                  | Work in progress                              |                                     |  |
|                                  | Debtors (Net of provision for doubtful debts) |                                     |  |
|                                  | Prepayments                                   |                                     |  |
| 10.60                            | VAT Recoverable                               | 530.54                              |  |
| 118,201.49                       | Temporary lendings (investments)              |                                     |  |
|                                  | Cash in hand                                  | 110,953.37                          |  |
| 118,212.09                       | <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                           | 111,483.91                          |  |
|                                  | <b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>                    |                                     |  |
| 3,595.00                         | Creditors                                     | 8,542.95                            |  |
| <u>114,617.09</u>                | <b>NET ASSETS</b>                             | <u>102,940.96</u>                   |  |
|                                  | <b>Represented by:</b>                        |                                     |  |
| 21,680.89                        | General fund Balance                          | 21,066.76                           |  |
|                                  | <b>Reserves:</b>                              |                                     |  |
|                                  | Capital                                       |                                     |  |
| 92,936.20                        | Earmarked                                     | 81,874.20                           |  |
|                                  | Adjustments                                   |                                     |  |
| <u>114,617.09</u>                |   | <u>102,940.96</u>                   |  |

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2025

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Financial Officer

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 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 2024/25

1. 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.
3. 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 2025**.
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 2025**. 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 2025
  - 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 2024/25

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 2025 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 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 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) 2024/25

- 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 2025.
- 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 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- 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 2025**.

| Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements |  | Yes | No |
|--|--|-----|----|
| All sections   | Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?  |     |    |
|  | Has all additional information requested, including <b>the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights</b> , 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?  |     |    |
|  | Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?  |     |    |
|  | Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2025</b> been reconciled to Box 8?   |     |    |
|  | 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? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested. |     |    |

**\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

**During** the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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.

| Internal control objective   | Yes | No* | Not covered** |
|--|-----|-----|---------------|
| <b>A.</b> Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.  |     |     |               |
| <b>B.</b> This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.   |     |     |               |
| <b>C.</b> This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.   |     |     |               |
| <b>D.</b> The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.  |     |     |               |
| <b>E.</b> Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.   |     |     |               |
| <b>F.</b> Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.  |     |     |               |
| <b>G.</b> Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.   |     |     |               |
| <b>H.</b> Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.  |     |     |               |
| <b>I.</b> Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.   |     |     |               |
| <b>J.</b> 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.  |     |     |               |
| <b>K.</b> If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>  |     |     |               |
| <b>L.</b> 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.  |     |     |               |
| <b>M.</b> 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 <i>(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i> |     |     |               |
| <b>N.</b> The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>   |     |     |               |

| <b>O. (For local councils only)</b>   | Yes | No | Not applicable |
|---|-----|----|----------------|
| Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee. |     |    |                |

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

DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

**\*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 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

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 2025, 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.  |        |     | <i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>   |
| 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.  |        |     | <i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>   |
| 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. |        |     | <i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>   |
| 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.   |        |     | <i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>   |
| 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.  |        |     | <i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>  |
| 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.  |        |     | <i>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.</i> |
| 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.  |        |     | <i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>   |
| 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.                                  |        |     | <i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>   |
| 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.                         | Yes    | No  | N/A  |
|   |        |     | <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>   |

**\*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:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS



## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

|  | Year ending           |                       | Notes and guidance   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
|  | 31 March<br>2024<br>£ | 31 March<br>2025<br>£ |  |
| <b>1.</b> Balances brought forward                                 |                       |                       | <i>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.</i>  |
| <b>2.</b> (+) Precept or Rates and Levies                          |                       |                       | <i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>   |
| <b>3.</b> (+) Total other receipts                                 |                       |                       | <i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>   |
| <b>4.</b> (-) Staff costs  |                       |                       | <i>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.</i> |
| <b>5.</b> (-) Loan interest/capital repayments                     |                       |                       | <i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>  |
| <b>6.</b> (-) All other payments                                   |                       |                       | <i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>  |
| <b>7.</b> (=) Balances carried forward                             |                       |                       | <i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>   |
| <b>8.</b> Total value of cash and short term investments           |                       |                       | <i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b></i>  |
| <b>9.</b> Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets |                       |                       | <i>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.</i>  |
| <b>10.</b> Total borrowings  |                       |                       | <i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>  |

| For Local Councils Only   | Yes | No | N/A |  |
|---|-----|----|-----|--|
| <b>11a.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | <i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i> |
| <b>11b.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | <i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>                                |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 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

DD/MM/YYYY

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

### 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 2025; 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 2024/25

(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 2024/25

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 2025.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

Smaller authority name: **OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION  
OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE &  
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27  
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)**

| NOTICE  | NOTES  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1. Date of announcement 2 June 2025 (a)</b></p> <p><b>2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.</b></p> <p><b>Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2025, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</b></p> <p>(b) Laura Lawrence – Clerk/RFO<br/>4 Meadow Farm Close, Oakington, Cambridge, CB24 3AS<br/>Tel: 07903 295860<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk">clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>commencing on (c) <b>Tuesday 3 June 2025</b></p> <p>and ending on (d) <b>Monday 14 July 2025</b></p> <p><b>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and</li><li>• The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.</li></ul> <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p><b>4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:</b></p> <p><b>PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)</b><br/><b>15 Westferry Circus</b><br/><b>Canary Wharf</b><br/><b>London E14 4HD</b><br/><a href="mailto:sba@pkf-l.com">sba@pkf-l.com</a></p> <p><b>5. This announcement is made by (e) Laura Lawrence, Clerk/RFO</b></p> | <p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority</p> |

## LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

**Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.**

### **The basic position**

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

### **The right to inspect the accounting records**

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2025 for 2024/25 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

### **The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records**

**You should first ask your smaller authority** about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

### **The right to make objections at audit**

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#).

### **A final word**

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication [Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights](#) are available from the NAO website.

If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the *Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return*.

# Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

## Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

| Asset Description              | Date Acquired | Purchase Value | Current Value | Location /Responsibility | Estimated Life | Usage/Capacity | Charges |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| 1 x Village sign               |               | 1,000.00       | 1,000.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x Bench Set, Orchard         | Donated 2018  |                |               |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x CCTV hub (DVR)             | 2014          | 1,164.00       | 1,164.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x Printer                    | 2019          | 228.00         | 228.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x Wooden bench, near shop    | 2018          | 220.00         | 220.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x Wooden bench, Rec          | 2009          | 600.00         | 600.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 1 x Wooden bench, Village Sign | 2014          | 564.00         | 564.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 10 x Filing cabinets           |               | 10.00          | 10.00         |                          |                |                |         |
| 100 x Pavilion chairs          | 2008          | 3,300.00       | 3,300.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 16 x Planted containers        | 2018          | 867.00         | 867.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 2 x Metal/Perspex Shelter -Cam | Various       | 5,100.00       | 5,100.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 2 x Spinner Bowls              | 2012          | 2,208.00       | 2,208.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 2 x Table trolley              | 2008          | 340.00         | 340.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| 20 x Large tables              | 2008          | 1,558.00       | 1,558.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 3 x breakfast benches          | 2012          | 1,731.00       | 1,731.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 3 x Hardwood picnic tables     | 2012          | 3,219.00       | 3,219.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 4 x Brick bus shelters         | Various       | 10,200.00      | 10,200.00     |                          |                |                |         |
| 4 x Chair trucks               | 2008          | 1,028.00       | 1,028.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 4 x HD CCTV camera             | 2015-2018     | 1,475.00       | 1,475.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| 8 x Small tables               | 2008          | 435.00         | 435.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| Bin, Longstanton Road          | 2018          | 153.00         | 153.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| Birds Nest swing               | 2012          | 3,637.00       | 3,637.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| Cableway                       | 2012          | 7,203.00       | 7,203.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| Cableway tensioner             | 2012          | 330.00         | 330.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| Car Park Lighting              | 2008          | 2,000.00       | 2,000.00      |                          |                |                |         |
| Combination Unit               | 2012          | 14,874.00      | 14,874.00     |                          |                |                |         |



# Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

## Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

| Asset Description             | Date Acquired | Purchase Value    | Current Value       | Location /Responsibility | Estimated Life | Usage/Capacity | Charges |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| Community Assets (Nominal)    |               | 6.00              | 6.00                |                          |                |                |         |
| Cradle seats                  | 2012          | 120.00            | 120.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| Crazy Dragon                  | 2012          | 716.00            | 716.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| Debrillator Cabinet           | 2015          | 340.00            | 340.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| Duo Swing                     | 2012          | 2,087.00          | 2,087.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Garden Seesaw                 | 2012          | 3,573.00          | 3,573.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Height Barrier                | 2018          | 1,840.00          | 1,840.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Laptop                        | 2017          | 360.00            | 360.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| MUGA fencing                  | 2009          | 22,575.00         | 22,575.00           |                          |                |                |         |
| MUGA floodlights              | 2009          | 17,874.00         | 17,874.00           |                          |                |                |         |
| MUGA goals                    | 2009          | 972.00            | 972.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| MUGA tennis posts             | 2009          | 819.00            | 819.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| MVAS (Speed unit)             | 2019          | 3,500.00          | 3,500.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Noticeboard, Longstanton Road | 2018          | 550.00            | 550.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| Ocean/Home net & tower        | 2012          | 15,567.00         | 15,567.00           |                          |                |                |         |
| Pavilion Car park surface     | 2008          | 15,000.00         | 15,000.00           |                          |                |                |         |
| Pavilion Path                 | 2016          | 4,157.00          | 4,157.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Pond railing                  | 2017          | 1,092.00          | 1,092.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Queensgate bench              | 2012          | 466.00            | 466.00              |                          |                |                |         |
| Rec Barriers                  |               | 5,800.00          | 5,800.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Rocking Horse                 | 2012          | 2,400.00          | 2,400.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Sports Pavilion               | 2008          | 700,000.00        | 1,067,816.00        |                          |                |                |         |
| Stepping Blocks with rope     | 2012          | 1,274.00          | 1,274.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Storage container             | 2016          | 1,650.00          | 1,650.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Swings - flat seats           | 2012          | 1,410.00          | 1,410.00            |                          |                |                |         |
| Wetpour Surface               | 2012          | 10,583.00         | 10,583.00           |                          |                |                |         |
| Wicksteed rota rider          | 2012          | 6,628.00          | 6,628.00            |                          |                |                |         |
|                               |               | <b>884,803.00</b> | <b>1,252,619.00</b> |                          |                |                |         |

**Oakington & Westwick Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments**

| Asset Description                       | Date Acquired | Purchase Value   | Current Value    | Location /Responsibility  | Estimated Life | Usage/Capacity | Charges |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| <b>Administration</b>                   |               |                  |                  |                           |                |                |         |
| Defibrillator                           | 14/11/2022    | 873.00           | 873.00           |                           |                |                |         |
|   |               | <b>873.00</b>    | <b>873.00</b>    |                           |                |                |         |
| <b>Earmarked Reserves</b>               |               |                  |                  |                           |                |                |         |
| 2 sets seats Rec project                | 19/08/2022    | 3,135.00         | 3,135.00         |                           |                |                |         |
| 50% deposit Corten boards - Rec Project | 04/10/2022    | 1,350.00         | 1,350.00         |                           |                |                |         |
| 50% deposit, Pavilion blinds            | 14/07/2023    | 680.83           | 680.83           |                           |                |                |         |
| A1 Interpretation Boards - Rec project  | 14/11/2022    | 700.00           | 700.00           |                           |                |                |         |
| Corten display boards (balance)         | 14/11/2022    | 1,470.00         | 1,470.00         |                           |                |                |         |
| Curved Seating - Rec project            | 19/08/2022    | 12,102.00        | 12,102.00        |                           |                |                |         |
| Pavilion blinds - balance               | 14/08/2023    | 680.83           | 680.83           |                           |                |                |         |
| Solar Lights - Rec project              | 14/11/2022    | 199.97           | 199.97           |                           |                |                |         |
|   |               | <b>20,318.63</b> | <b>20,318.63</b> |                           |                |                |         |
| <b>Grounds &amp; Open Spaces</b>        |               |                  |                  |                           |                |                |         |
| 1 x ANPR camera                         | 2020          | 1,670.00         | 1,670.00         | Pavilion building externa |                |                |         |
| Cemetery path                           | 2021          | 10,550.00        | 10,550.00        |                           |                |                |         |
| Picnic bench                            | 2021          | 550.00           | 550.00           | Community Orchard, Rec    |                |                |         |
| Picnic bench - Rec orchard              | 12/12/2022    | 540.00           | 540.00           |                           |                |                |         |
| RFQ 3 - Perimeter Path Excavation       | 09/05/2023    | 11,640.00        | 11,640.00        |                           |                |                |         |
| RFQ 4- Perimeter path construction      | 12/06/2023    | 22,310.00        | 22,310.00        |                           |                |                |         |
| Water bowser                            | 17/01/2023    | 430.28           | 430.28           |                           |                |                |         |
|   |               | <b>47,690.28</b> | <b>47,690.28</b> |                           |                |                |         |
| <b>Sports Pavilion</b>                  |               |                  |                  |                           |                |                |         |
| 3G surface                              | 4 July 2024   | 41,395.00        | 41,395.00        |                           |                |                |         |
|   |               | <b>41,395.00</b> | <b>41,395.00</b> |                           |                |                |         |

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council  
Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

| Asset Description | Date Acquired | Purchase Value | Current Value | Location /Responsibility | Estimated Life | Usage/Capacity | Charges |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| Grand Total:      |               | 995,079.91     | 1,362,895.91  |                          |                |                |         |

## **Oakington & Westwick Parish Council Charges 2024-25**

### **Charges**

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Tennis Club – courts rental   | £200 per annum                |
| Rec – for use by organisations outside the parish   | £20 per session               |
| Fairground lettings   | £1000 deposit. Rent from £150 |
| Reward for information that leads to a conviction of a person who for damage to or theft of PC property | Up to £500                    |
| Parking Bay Licence Fees  | £25 per annum                 |
| Rec hire by businesses, e.g exercise classes  | £10 per hour                  |

Reviewed: 13 May 2024

Next Review: May 2025