Revised 18/3/26

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

SEASCALE PARISH COUNCIL

www.seascaleparishcouncil.co.uk

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**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. 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. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 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)*.	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)*.	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) 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

04/05/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

MRS S C BAMFORTH

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

S Bamforth

Date 4/5/2025

***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).**

- Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

wledge as the members of

SEASCALE PARISH COUNCIL

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

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

Clerk

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

...unting Statements 2024/25 for

SEASCALE PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
...ances brought ...rward	~~51725~~	107684	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	25010	51020	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	92768	93433	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	6275	7349	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	55545	129303	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	107684	115485	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

Adjusted figures

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	107684	115485	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	72675	94166	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

Date

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

[signature]

as recorded in minute reference

12/3/26.

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

[signature]

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Seascale Parish Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor 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 the 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.

On review of year end reserves it was noted that all of the reserves held by the council appeared to be earmarked for a specific purpose. Whilst it is understood that councils should not hold large volumes of reserves without purpose, it needs to be recognised that it is highly unlikely that any budget will account for every eventuality for up to a year in advance and therefore an element of general reserve is a practical necessity. Best practice suggests this level should be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. The council should monitor its general reserve levels and ensure it takes appropriate action to redesignate any earmarked reserves for general purposes should it become necessary.

We identified during our initial review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that boxes 1-6 of Section 2 of the AGAR do not arithmetically add down to Box 7 by £1 when summed. When rounding the numbers for the Return care should be taken to ensure boxes 1-6 sum to box 7 in accordance with Paragraph 2.19 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2024 and that box 7 agrees or reconciles to box 8 as is required per Paragraph 2.23 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2024.

The above issues were also raised on the prior year's External Audit Report and hence these issues were not appropriately actioned. The council therefore should have answered 'No' to Assertion 7 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to taking appropriate action on matters reported from internal and external audit.

Section 2 Accounting Statements has not been correctly completed. Boxes 3 and 6 include transfers between bank current and reserve accounts which, per Paragraph 2.14 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2024, do not represent receipts or payments for the authority. We would expect these figures to be restated on the next year's AGAR, and marked as such, to bring it to the attention of the reader.

Section 2 Accounting Statements has not been correctly completed. Box 3 includes a receipt for a duplicated precept receipt. Whilst we acknowledge that this was the precept body's mistake, this should have been entered in Box 2 'Annual precept'. As a result of this we would have expected Assertion 1 on the Annual Governance Statement to be answered 'No'. We would expect these figures to be restated on the next year's AGAR, and marked as such, to bring it to the attention of the reader. Box 2 should be £51,020 and Box 3 should be restated accordingly.

The council have confirmed that they have not formally considered all potential risks posed by the current arrangement for the mower and its storage/access. Therefore, we would have expected the council to have answered 'No' to Assertion 5 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

SEE CONTINUATION PAGE...

...CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Box 11b on Section 2 of the AGAR was submitted with a 'No' response however this is inconsistent with the answer given to trust fund disclosures elsewhere on the AGAR. Given the council are not a sole trustee, the response to this box should have been 'N/A'.

Incomplete information was provided with the initial supporting data submitted for review with regards to significant variances, which was later provided on request. The parish council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

It has been noted by the chair that historically payment approval schedules were not physically approved, nor were they minuted as being presented or approved during council meetings. This must be done in future.

We note that there is an arrangement with a supplier whereby no invoices are produced and only additional hours are notified for payment. The council have informed us that they are rectifying this situation. All arrangements should be made and minuted at the appropriate council meeting, contracts should be in place and payments should be supported by evidence and approved through proper process.

Whilst it is clear that the grass cutting arrangement was notified to council over a period of time, the minutes are not sufficient in their recording of decisions, timings, payment approvals etc. We recommend that the council look to strengthen their minutes moving forwards. Furthermore, all such arrangements should be subject to formal consideration of terms and contracts being in place.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We 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.

External Auditor Name	External Auditor Signature	Date
MOORE	Moore	27/02/2026

Smaller Authority Name: Seascale Parish Council ________________________________

NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL AUDIT

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

1 The audit of accounts for (Smaller Authority Name) Seascale Parish Council __ for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Return is available for inspection by any local government elector in the area of (Smaller Authority Name) Seascale ________________________ on application to

(a) (Name of Clerk)
Mrs M Bradley (supporting vacancy) ________________________________

(b) (Address of Clerk)

____

The Library Link, Gosforth Road, Seascale CA20 1PN______________________

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(c) (Telephone/email, and hours and arrangements to view)
clerk@seascaleparishcouncil.co.uk____________________________________
Viewed at the Library Link during opening hours from 19/3/26. Free of charge for 30 days.____

3 Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £___5.00___ for each copy of the Annual Return by emailing the clerk.

Announcement made by (Name of Clerk)

Mrs M Bradley____

____

Date of Announcement

19/3/26____