

Taunton Charter Trustees

Tuesday, 21st June, 2022,
6.00 pm

The John Meikle Room - The Deane House



Members: Sue Lees, Brenda Weston, Lee Baker, Chris Booth,
Simon Coles, Tom Deakin, Caroline Ellis, Marcia Hill,
Richard Lees, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Martin Peters,
Hazel Prior-Sankey, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts
and Danny Wedderkopp

Agenda

1. Election of Mayor Of Taunton

Councillor Francesca Smith to propose and Councillor Richard Lees to second:-

"That Councillor Susan Lees be elected Mayor of Taunton for the ensuing year".

If the motion is carried, Councillor Susan Lees will arrange to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Deputy Mayor of Taunton

Councillor Francesca Smith to propose and Councillor Lee Baker to second:-

"That Councillor Brenda Weston be elected Deputy Mayor of Taunton for the ensuing year".

If the motion is carried, Councillor Brenda Weston will arrange to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Appointment of Civic Marshal

The Mayor of Taunton to invite nominations from the Charter Trustees for the role of Civic Marshal.

Having been elected to office, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will retire to be robed. Once they return to the John Meikle Room, the Mayor will briefly address the Charter Trustees before returning to the agenda for the meeting.

4. The Mayor will present to Councillor Smith her Past Mayor Badge

Unfortunately, due to delays due to Covid-19, the Past Mayor's Badge had not arrived in time to be presented at last year's AGM.

The Mayor to request that Councillor Francesca Smith comes forward to be presented with her Past Mayor Badge as is customary. Following the motion that was carried unanimously last year that the best thanks of the Charter Trustees be accorded to Councillor Francesca Smith for the manner in which she has discharged the duties of the office of Mayor of the Town during her two terms of office.

5. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

6. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

7. Minutes of the previous meetings of the Taunton Charter Trustees

(Pages 7 - 18)

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings of the Trustees held on 14th December and 20th January.

8. To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standing Committee 2021/22

(Pages 19 - 34)

9. Petitions

To receive any petitions from residents of Taunton containing over 200 signatures in accordance with Standing Order 30.

10. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any

questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

11. Communications

To receive such communications as the Mayor may desire to lay before the Charter Trustees.

12. Appointment of Members of the Standing Committee 2022/23

(Pages 35 - 36)

To appoint Charter Trustees, from nominations received from each group, to serve on the Standing Committee for the year 2022/2023. The proposed 'Powers and Duties' of the Standing Committee are set out in the attached document. If the Committee allocated politically proportionally as per the Standing Orders there would be 6 Liberal Democrats and 1 Labour seat, though it was within the gift of the political groups as to whether they took up their full entitlement.

The current membership is as follows;

- Cllr Simon Coles (Chair)
- Cllr Chris Booth
- Cllr Tom Deakin
- Cllr Sue Lees
- Cllr Martin Peters
- Cllr Derek Perry
- Cllr Libby Lisgo

13. Final External Auditor Report for 2020-21

(Pages 37 - 48)

The Charter Trustees must consider the report and consider what, if any, action is required.

14. Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 - TO FOLLOW

The purpose of this item is to receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22.

15. Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

(Pages 49 - 52)

This item is to approve the Annual Governance Statement for submission to the Charter Trustee's external Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP.

16. Accounting Statements 2021/22

(Pages 53 - 58)

This item is to approve the Draft Accounting Statements

2021/2022 for submission to the Charter Trustee's external Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP.

17. Questions under Standing Order 8

- A A Charter Trustee may ask the Mayor any question upon an item which is under consideration by the Charter Trustees.
- B Every question shall be put and answered without discussion. The person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer but shall give an explanation for declining to do so.
- C An answer may take the form of:-
 - 1 a direct oral answer; or
 - 2 where the desired information is contained in a publication of the Charter Trustees, a reference to that publication; or
 - 3 where reply to the question cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated to Charter Trustees.

18. Dates of future meetings

The Clerk to the Taunton Charter Trustees to advise of the dates of future meetings for 2022/23.

19. Any items which the Mayor considers to be urgent business

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Taunton Charter Trustees - 14 December 2021

Present: Councillor Sue Lees (Chair)

Councillors Brenda Weston, Lee Baker, Simon Coles, Tom Deakin, Caroline Ellis, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Hazel Prior-Sankey and Federica Smith-Roberts

Officers: Jo Comer, Marcus Prouse and Charles Groom

Also Present: Councillor Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

28. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Richard Lees, Marcia Hill and Francesca Smith.

29. Minutes of the previous meetings of the Taunton Charter Trustees

(Minutes of the meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 29th June and 20th July were circulated with the agenda)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 29th June and 20th July be confirmed as a correct record.

30. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke

31. **Public Participation**

Mr Roger House, Taunton Resident, was in attendance and posed the following question;

Electoral arrangements page 5 and question 11 and the number 25

We have listed 16 existing Councillors for the Shadow Councillor Group to set up new Third Tier Councils. This does not sound many compared to the number of electors and 70 odd parish councillors that serve them in the eight surrounding parishes. I assume we have to follow the important Unitary Council boundary review process, before being able to pinpoint what Council size the Boundary Commission will permit for Taunton third tier Councils. The Boundary Commission's advice on electoral arrangements is related to existing council sizes, for parishes over 20,000 electors: they report parish or town councils vary from 13 to 31 members.

County Towns, Dorchester and Truro around 20,000 electors, have 20 and 21 members respectively. Salisbury City Council population 40,000 formed in 2008 have 24 Council members.

Also the newest formed (2019) South West Town Council, Weymouth; it has 48,000 electors and 29 elected members.

16 elected members for Taunton stated in the consultation documents is clearly inadequate. Even if we start with 16 district councillors as a shadow body to set up a new Town Council then the future elected number must as a minimum be of 25. If new boundaries are not available by May 2023 elections, a 16 strong elected Council after inception should be allowed to co-opt some extra members, until a subsequent election is fought with wards for 25 Town Councillors. That would be an increase in councillors - north of the rail line 5 to 8 and south of the rail line 11 to 17. Our current electorate of 34,536 must surely rise rapidly as town centre housing proposals are built and empty offices converted to residential.

Another perception with existing town councils and warding is that where large multi-member wards can lead to one party block voting and continuing unhealthy political representation. Dorchester Town 5 wards and 18 Lib Dems of 20 Councillors, Frome town 5 wards and all Independents for Frome Councillors, then Yeovil Town all large wards returning just Lib Dem Councillors.

The latest new town council in Weymouth has been formed with smaller wards confined to two or three members to reflect more diversity and help define local communities within the town, as now described in boundary commission advice. That has meant in Weymouth there are four differing party groups plus independent councillors elected to the new body.

This modern concept of party warding is what we want here and taken with the Councillor number issue above, makes in particular the forming of a new single Town Council with one or two member wards

“Much more attractive than the option inferred by the Councils current consultation”.

A councillor workload spread, vital to help more young working people to participate.

And lastly can we ask the towns estate agents to properly name those wards based on their property for sale or let adverts. The increase in Councillors numbers is key to making this possible, for example

For the current Victoria Ward 2 seats become 3 - Priory and Trinity classic Victorian areas perhaps combined as one ward and Firepool brash new development constrained by the rail line, a single ward.

For Creechbarrow ward, easy to split in three – Lambrook, Halcon and Lane Estate. Just add 19 more traditional place names for a town council based on real communities.

Can the Charter Trustees support election warding on these principals to better promote the Taunton Town Council case to fill the unparished area?

The Mayor thanked Mr House for his question and asked Officers to provide a response. Officers thanked Mr House for his statement and question and offered a written response if required. Officers felt that if the chosen geographical area was wider than the Unparished Area it would not preclude the Council from bringing in persons representing those areas into the Shadow Town Council. The electoral arrangements would not be for the Boundary Commission but the principal council to decide on those matters.

32. **Petitions**

The Clerk advised that no petitions had been received.

33. **Motions to the Charter Trustees**

The Clerk advised that no Motions had been submitted for consideration.

34. **Communications**

The Mayor gave a brief synopsis of her activities since the summer;

- Announced the Follow Your Heart Trail and went to the subsequent auction.
- Several lunchtime concerts at St. John’s Church on Friday afternoons.
- The National Citizens Service Planning meetings at Taunton School.

- Openings such as St. Margarets Hospice Fete, Indoor Play Area at Bindon Road, new Lidl supermarket, new Shoe Store on Bridge Street, Somerset Chocolate Company at the Wetlands Centre.
- As Patron of the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir, the Mayor attended their 75th Anniversary dinner and concert.
- Civic Events such as VJ and VE Day, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance, NHS Thank you Day and Carols around the Bandstand, which raised £740 for the Mayor's Charity.

35. **To answer questions under Standing Order 8**

The Clerk advised that no such questions had been requested to be put.

36. **Community Governance Review for Taunton - Stage 1 Consultation**

The Clerk advised that he hoped the Charter Trustees were aware of the current Stage 1 consultation underway on this matter. He and other Councillors on the Working Group had been attending various parish council meetings in the area effected. The Clerk advised the Councillors that they could decide to submit a collective response as well as a singular response.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- Concerns were raised about the shortness of the consultation period, especially during the Christmas period and how people could be encouraged to respond.
- *The Clerk advised that 96 people had responded so far and several emails. Parish Councils were also doing their own surveys.*
- Concerns were raised that the views of those in the parished areas would be given more prominence in the consultation due to the unparished area being disadvantaged and it was expressed that they should be treated equally.
- A query was raised around the elections in 2022 and the involvement of those Councillors elected representing those wards in the affected area.
- *The Officer would come back with a written response on this matter.*
- The continued maintenance of the Taunton Mayoralty was considered important to the people of the town.

The Charter Trustees for Taunton **RESOLVED** to respond to Somerset West and Taunton Council's Stage 1 Consultation on the Community Governance Review for Taunton as follows;

We believe that a single Town Council should be set up to cover at least the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton.

37. **Interim External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21**

The Clerk introduced the report, who had been liaising with the External Auditors regarding some changes which may be required to the Governance Return and Account Statements before its finalisation, due largely to the way the Charter Trustees were funded in their first year of operation from the Special Expenses precept, and its subsequent return of unspent funds to the District Council. The Final Approved Statement of Accounts would be published on the Charter Trustees webpage when completed.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- Concerns were raised that the Charter Trustees were perhaps not getting the appropriate level of financial support from SWT.
- *The Charter Trustees gained a good level of support from colleagues at Finance in SWT, which isn't necessarily covered by the precept in purchasing from SWT.*

The Charter Trustees **RESOLVED** that they had considered the report and requested that the SWT s151 Officer be engaged to advise on this matter.

(The Meeting ended at 7.49 pm)

Taunton Charter Trustees - 20 January 2022

Present: Councillor Sue Lees (Mayor)

Councillors Brenda Weston, Lee Baker, Chris Booth, Simon Coles, Caroline Ellis, Libby Lisgo and Hazel Prior-Sankey

Officers: Jo Comer and Marcus Prouse and Jackie Evans

Also Present Councillors Francesca Smith and Federica Smith-Roberts
via Zoom:

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

38. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Deakin, Hill, R Lees, Perry and Peters.

Cllr Smith and Smith-Roberts joined the meeting via Zoom.

39. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees - TO FOLLOW

(Minutes of the meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 14th December 2020 were not able to be circulated with the agenda)

The Clerk informed Councillors that unfortunately the minutes of the proceedings of the previous meeting were not yet ready but would be included in the Agenda pack for the next meeting along with the minutes of this meeting.

40. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

41. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak or ask questions.

42. **Petitions**

No petitions had been submitted for the Charter Trustees consideration.

43. **Motions to the Charter Trustees**

No motions had been submitted for the Charter Trustees consideration.

44. **Communications**

The Mayor reported that all of the events in the run-up to Christmas had been very special, including the lights switch-on and Carols around the Bandstand. January was going to be quieter but the Mayor was enjoying representing the people of Taunton to the best of her ability and would continue to do so.

45. **To answer questions under Standing Order 8**

No Councillors present had requested to ask a question under Standing Order 8.

46. **Taunton Area - Local Community Networks**

The Clerk introduced the item which had been placed on the Agenda per a request made by Cllr Weston prior to Christmas. Two Officers from the Local Community Network (LCN) workstream from both Somerset County Council and Mendip District Council, Alyn Jones and Sara Skirton respectively had agreed to attend and present some slides and take any questions Councillors had on the developing project.

The Mayor invited the officers present to make their presentation. LCN's would help to set priorities for the new Council and influence how services are delivered in their areas. It is currently envisaged that 15-20 would be created as part of the proposal, but a lot of work was still needed to define the geographies, recognising

functional community boundaries. There would be no splitting of towns or parishes. Each LCN would be given a small budget to get projects over the ground and a significant influence over the overall Unitary Budget. They would also be given formal Committee status, with an elected Unitary Councillor for that area sitting on it, meeting 6-8 times a year. A lot of work would take place outside of the Committees. They were an opportunity to give local people a voice in decision making. Decisions would need to align with the Policy framework of the Unitary Council. There had been four LCN pilots set up. The LCN's will be supported by a 'data-pack' similar to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The LCN boundaries will be brought forward for consultation during the summer. There was also ongoing work on a Charter with Town and Parish Councils in consultation with the Somerset Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- The information presented was interesting but was considered generic at this stage. A question was raised as to how aware officers working on the LCN project were as to the potential creation of a Town Council for Taunton and the creation of an LCN alongside which could be particularly complicated?
- *It was recognised as an area of focus and would work closely with colleagues in Somerset West and Taunton leading on that project.*
- It was commented that as Councillors for Taunton it was felt that there was no voice for them in this process and the Charter Trustees should be included as consultees as much as Town Councillors elsewhere in Somerset.
- *Part of the attendance this evening was to raise the concept with the Trustees and no decisions had been taken, which would be for the administration of the new Council. Feedback from this meeting would be helpful in shaping the project. Conversations would continue throughout this process.*
- Further clarification was sought on the structure of the LCN's, e.g. how would a person be appointed to an LCN, their status and how would this be decided? A Committee of the Council would suggest a more formal structure.
- *This was still to be decided in appointments. In terms of engagement with different bodies there needed to be careful thought as to how the LCN's would best function to support these. The Pilots would help inform this and the evaluation that was ongoing.*
- The possible devolution of Planning matters to a local level was queried.
- *This was not in scope of the current work due to the way the Business Case was written but was open to the new Unitary administration if possible. This was something for the service alignment workstream.*
- *In other areas such as Wiltshire, LCN's had been able to augment the Unitary Council offer to provide something more bespoke.*
- The concern over the lack of ability to hold hybrid meetings legally was considered a concern in allowing everyone who wished to participate easily and accessibly.

- *LCN meetings would be considered touchpoints and the substantive work would be undertaken between.*
- Discussion was held on the interplay between the Community Governance Review for Taunton and the LCN's for the Taunton area, particularly in relation to boundaries.
- *Each voluntary organisation would need to decide whether to commit resources to the LCN and its decision-making process.*
- The One Teams in Somerset West and Taunton and Sedgmoor were considered more appropriate to deal with confidential and difficult local issues and it was hoped these would remain.
- *Individual circumstances would not be discussed at LCN's.*
- Discussion was held on the alignment of the Policy Framework and the interplay between LCN's and the Unitary Council.

The Mayor thanked the attendees for their time and looked forward to further information in the due course of time.

47. **Budget Monitoring 2021/22**

The Governance Specialist introduced the item and confirmed that a colleague from the Finance Team at SWT, Jackie Evans was in attendance via Zoom if there were any specific questions that the Specialist could answer. A further breakdown of the Civic Spend budget line (£10,000) was also included to provide further insight and transparency on the costs. There were a couple of items such as Accommodation and Vehicle usage had not been re-charged as yet by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

There was a predicted overspend this year due to the impact of the 1.75% pay award and the liability of the Charter Trustees for Value Added Tax, both impacts had not initially been factored in. The Charter Trustees did not enjoy exemption status as Somerset West and Taunton do and this had been explored as to how this could be gained but was a potentially lengthy process involving the laying of orders in Parliament, and in the light of the Community Governance Review may be overtaken by events. The VAT costs had been built into the forthcoming years budget.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- A query was raised as to whether monies could be moved between budget lines to support particular areas of need?
- *There was not much scope within this years budget to do so, but it was possible to do so providing the Charter Trustees kept within the overall budget total.*
- Clarification was sought on any grants budget for The Mayor and the current situation with the Twinning support monies.

RESOLVED to note the review of the in-year spend of the Taunton Charter Trustees Budget for 2021/22

48. **Taunton Charter Trustees Budget 2022/23**

The Specialist in Governance introduced this item, the third budget that the Taunton Charter Trustees would set following their creation. Following the advice of the Internal Auditors the Precept request was separate from the Budget item. The Budget provided for a range of activities that the Mayoralty covers over the year. As Members were aware, this budget would have to be justified to ratepayers and managed responsibly. There was a need for any spending to have a direct link to the civic role of the Taunton Mayoralty and the limitations in scope as Charter Trustees.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- It was queried as to whether the two twinning link organisations had been contacted to ensure they definitively did not require funds?
- *Recent contact had been made with both organisations and SWT now held the funds on behalf of the Lisieux Twinning Organisation.*
- Comment was made that not all those who participated in twinning were from the unparished area.
- A question was raised as to what would happen when the Charter Trustees ceased to exist at the end of March 2022 between the few weeks when there would be an election.
- *The District Council would set the budget for the new Town Council for 23/24 based on an estimation. Further work would need to be understood what would happen to the Mayoralty if there was any proposal to split the Charter Trustee area.*
- *When the Re-organisation Order is created a Shadow Town Council could be created which would support the arrangements needed to be put in place by 1st April 2023. A written answer would be sought on the technical issue raised by that gap between the 31st March and the May Election.*
- Further detail was sought on the possible exercise of a Freedom Parade, especially in a Jubilee year and the extra demands on a Mayor because of the Platinum Jubilee.
- *Officers had discussed the number of events going on in the town in 2022, some of which that Madam Mayor would only be attending, and some that she would be hosting.*

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees for Taunton;

1. Approve the budget for the financial year 2022/2023 at the amount of £58,722, to be collected on their behalf from the Unparished Area of Taunton ratepayers by Somerset West and Taunton Council as the billing authority. This was equivalent to £3.85 expenditure per Band D property.

49. **Precept request for 2022/23**

- Discussion was had on the limitations of the precepting ability of the Charter Trustees.
- *It was confirmed that the Charter Trustees were a separate precepting body but that they did not have the competence to precept for any costs outside those directly related to the Mayoralty.*

- A query was raised as to why the Band D was used as an equivalence and further information was requested on the impact on other bands.
- *This could be provided.*

RESOLVED that the Charter Trustees for Taunton;

1. Set a precept for the financial year 2022/2023 at the amount of £58,722, to be collected on their behalf from the Unparished Area of Taunton ratepayers by Somerset West and Taunton Council as the billing authority. This was equivalent to £3.85 expenditure per Band D property.

(The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

Record of Decision taken by Executive Portfolio Holder

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 09/09/2021

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Marcus Prouse
m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 24/09/21

Details of decision:

1) St. Mary Magdalene Church PCC -

A bid for a contribution to the refurbishment of the Coach House, a Grade II listed building in the Church yard for community use. They currently have raised circa £98,000 as at September 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the project was awarded a contribution of £5000, to be released upon notification that the entire project budget requirement had been successfully fund-raised. The Standing Committee recommended that the PCC facilitate discussion with SWT to see if that authority would be willing to help contribute to the project by assisting with the landscaping aspects.*

2) Bath Place Traders Association –

A bid for a contribution to fund the cost of repairing and repainting 22 shop fronts in Bath Place, Taunton. This is just part of their overall project to keep Bath Place looking as clean, tidy and attractive as they possibly can. Bath Place Traders Association was set up in 1998 and currently has 18 members. BPTA and the committee themselves do not have any connections to the 3 businesses who have submitted quotes for this work.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £5400 was awarded to the Association. They requested that the Economic Development department of the District Council supported the Association if possible in fundraising the rest of the required monies.*

3) COACH Centre for Outdoor Activity & Community Hub –

A bid for to fund a defibrillator, defibrillator box, pads and installation that can be erected on the outside of COACH so that it can be used by the community in an emergency to save lives. The cost of the project is outlined as £2,545.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended to offer a contribution of £500.*

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	As part of the bid process, all Charter Trustees have been made aware of the	2021

	bids.	
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £23,213.70	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact		
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

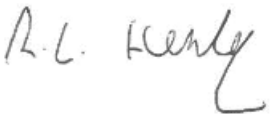
Any conflicts of interest declared by Executive PFH, Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.

N/a

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: Councillor Ross Henley

Date: 24/09/21

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by the SWT Executive PFH following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –
governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Record of Decision taken by Executive Portfolio Holder

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 18/10/2021

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Marcus Prouse
m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 13/12/2021

Details of decision:

1) Unlocking Potential Somerset -

A bid to continue to support the costs of running one of the three, three year 'Insights to Apprenticeships' programmes being run across the Taunton Deane area and specifically the Unparished Area. (£12,000 had been granted in year one (July 2020), with an expected cost of £36,000 over the life of the project.).

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the allocated funds of £24,000 were released to the Unlocking Potential Somerset project to enable them to complete years 2 and 3 of the project. Three requests were made*

- 1) *A breakdown of the households from the Unparished Area participating in the scheme if possible.*
- 2) *Further feedback in due course on the Academic year/calendar year approach and any change to that.*
- 3) *A written update report in 6 months time if possible.*

2) Southern Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra –

A bid to support the costs of running two small concert recitals in individual Care Homes for those who are unable to go out and /or a concert in a community church hall (St James) to which the audience can travel and another concert for a larger audience (probably approximately 80 people) in St James would take place in spring or summer 2022 when the weather should be better for travel. The proposed budget for a concert in each of two Care homes would be £2,600 in total. The budget for a concert in St James Church Hall would be £2,620, with the same number of musicians, and would include hall hire for the day.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the Chamber Orchestra were provided with the £2600 to fund the two concerts in care homes in the Unparished Area. The proposal for a concert at St. James in Spring/Summer 2022 was felt to require further detail.*

3) Cllr Chris Booth –

A bid to utilise a historical capital budget of around £10,995 specifically ring-fenced for the replenishment of play equipment in Unparished Area parks. A proposal had been worked up by Cllr Booth to place various pieces of equipment in Hamilton Gault Park including a nest rocker with back support, inclusive back to back roundabout and a swing with a parent/child seat.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended the approval of this bid.*

4) Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey –

A bid to install two waste bins on the green area between Laurel Close and Sycamore Close and another on Holway Road by the stream. The bid total is £2000 and would fund the installation and emptying until 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended approval of this bid.*

5) North Taunton Partnership –

A bid of £1450 to the Contain Outbreak Management Funding supplied to the Taunton Charter Trustees/Somerset West and Taunton Council on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton Council. The funds would enable the partnership to restart their social, fitness and educational groups on hold since March 2020. These include games afternoons X 2. Weekly luncheon club. Computer support group. Tai chi. Circuits exercise class. Cooking group. Knit & Natter. Creative Writing group. History group. Tea & Talk. Health Walks. Write to Read.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended approval of this bid.*

The Standing Committee also considered matters relating to Civic Hospitality and approved the spend for circa £2000 related to the Remembrance events that the Mayor would be hosting in the Town, which included Orders of Service printing, Transport, PA Kit hire, repair of robes and replacement Civic Marshall Stathe. This would be funded from the approved Civic Trustee budget and a further budget monitoring report would be provided to the Charter Trustees at their December meeting.

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	As part of the bid process, all Charter Trustees have been made aware of the bids.	2021
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £18,613.70	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact	N/A	
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

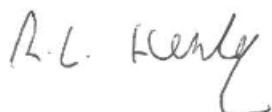
Any conflicts of interest declared by Executive PFH, Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.

N/a

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: Councillor Ross Henley

Date: 07/12/2021

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by the SWT Executive PFH following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –
governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Record of Decision taken by Executive Portfolio Holder

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 07/03/2022

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Marcus Prouse
m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 15/03/2022

Details of decision:

1) Somerset Armed Forces Day Committee -

A bid for a contribution towards the costs of putting on the Armed Forces Day free event in Vivary Park and Wilton Lands this summer.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2000 be made to the event. It is recommended that all funds were to be drawn down by December 2022 or they will be de-allocated.*

2) Creative Innovation Centre CIC –

A bid for a contribution towards the cost of installing new commercial grade aluminium front doors with windows to the Centre.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £1000 be made to this project. The bidders were advised to double check for any listed building/planning consent issues. It is recommended that all funds needed to be drawn down by December 2022 or they will be de-allocated.*

3) GoCreate Taunton CIC –

A bid for a contribution towards the costs of an outdoor trail of up to 30 corgi's to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2000 be made to the event. It is recommended that all funds needed to be drawn down by December 2022 or they will be de-allocated.*

4) Crimestoppers in the West Country -

A bid for a contribution towards the 'What Would You Do?' programme working with 9-10 year olds through drama based workshops and performance. The project is an early intervention to grooming for gang crime (including county lines), online safety, healthy relationships, mob mentality and Child (sexual and criminal) exploitation and will be specifically run in Halcon and North Taunton.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2000 be made to the event. It is recommended that all funds needed to be drawn down by December 2022 or they will be de-allocated.*

5) Craig Stone – SWT Town Centre Resilience and Transformation Lead

A bid for a contribution towards the costs of various Jubilee themed activities and enhancements taking place across the towns in the District this summer. A list of enhancements worth around £21,000 were highlighted in the bid.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that whilst they were fully supportive of the work, the lack of funding available to the Charter Trustees, not being a Town Council, meant that they unfortunately could not supplement with funds from this years Special Expenses budget, which was limited in size. They recommended that the Officer liaise with Officers supporting the Charter Trustees to see if the Mayoral Activities and Events budget could help support this activity and that they may be in a position to offer further support later in the year once the position has been established on the disbursement of the Special Expenses Budget for 22/23.*

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources subsequent to this has agreed to support the activities for Taunton by allocating the £4000 in the Special Expenses budget which has been held ring-fenced to be re-charged to SWT for the costs associated with Mayoral Activities and Events in previous years to be used towards supporting the Jubilee activities this forthcoming year.

6) Cllr Chris Booth -

A bid for the costs of installing new play equipment in the Lane Estate area at Blenheim Road Play Park and Allington Close Park following requests from the community. The total costs expected are £10,649.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

7) Cllr Tom Deakin - St. George's Church, Wilton PCC

A bid towards the costs of installing bike racks outside St. George's Church Wilton, for up to six cycles. The bidders were advised to check for any requirements around Heritage or Planning consents before undertaking the work. The total cost of the project was anticipated as being £250.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

8) Cllr Simon Coles -

A bid for the costs of installing two new Litter/Dog Bins in the Firepool/ Canal Area at a cost of £1000 per bin, which would cover the installation plus two years of emptying.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

9) Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey -

A bid towards the costs of putting hard standing underneath one of the two Basketball hoops in Hawthorn Park, Taunton.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that whilst they agreed with the merits of the project in principle, without a quote from the Parks and Open Spaces Team for the work this bid would need to come back for final confirmation of support.*

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	As part of the bid process, all Charter Trustees have been made aware of the bids.	2022
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £1139.70	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact		
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

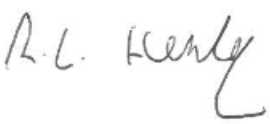
Any conflicts of interest declared by Executive PFH, Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.

N/a

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: Councillor Ross Henley

Date: 15/03/2022

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by the SWT Executive PFH following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –
governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Record of Decision taken by Executive Portfolio Holder

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 07/06/2022

Clerk to Charter Trustees for Taunton - Contact Details: Marcus Prouse
m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 10/06/2022

Details of decision:

1) Go Create CIC & Creative Innovation Centre CIC -

A bid for £5000 to provide support toward the rental costs of the large meeting room at Flook House so that the two CIC's and other not-for-profit organisations can support arts and cultural social enterprises to deliver community-based programmes, workshops, vocational learning and community meetings as identified in the Cultural Strategy. From arts health and wellbeing workshops to youth programmes and public events to encourage participation are just some of these events that will benefit the community. The costs for the meeting room cannot be supported by all associated organisations at this time as many are not-for-profit and funding the rent for 12 months will allow these organisations to look at non-SWT potential funding applications. The funds would also help make good the meeting room and other areas that the tenants will reside in e.g. painting, cosmetic works, etc. Thus, supporting the cultural strategy and helping to develop an arts and culture community asset.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2500 be awarded to this project.*

2) Voce Chamber Choir –

A bid for a contribution (circa £4200) to help prepare and deliver a free workshop for up to 20 people, followed by a free concert to be held in the Tudor Hall of the Old Municipal Building, which has a maximum capacity of 100 people. These events will both be actively promoted through local radio and social media, music clubs, art magazines, schools and colleges. There will be a focus on the music of Richard Mico, along with other music chosen on the theme of Births, Marriages and Death to reflect the current use of the building, which is home to Somerset Registration Services. This day will contribute to a wider project across the arts celebrating the 500th Anniversary of Old Municipal Buildings (OMB500) which will involve arts projects and contributions from a local historian and South West Heritage.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2100 be made to this project.*

3) Tim Hill and The Sound of the Streets –

A bid for a contribution (£6000) to this event, a free three-day festival. The Sound of the Streets will also create a website, make films and podcasts, and run education projects to inspire children and young people and support them to playing instruments and joining bands. The festival will run from 6pm Friday July 8th to 6pm Sunday, July 10th. The festival will be based in Goodland's Gardens with a marquee and stage, plus a stage in Castle Green and performances in the High Street.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £3000 be made to the event.*

4) YMCA Taunton -

A bid for £4692 to replace existing lighting in their sports hall and dance studio. The current lighting in these areas is old, poor quality and in some cases broken. They wish to install LED lighting that will provide a brighter light and is more economical in terms of running costs and maintenance. Current users of the building find that the ineffective lighting curtails their participation and enjoyment of activities.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

5) Taunton Pride CIC -

A bid for a contribution of £5511 towards the costs of the Pride Parade 2022 part of Taunton Live & Pride Festival 2022 celebrating the arts, diversity, culture and inclusivity with the theme of Educate / Celebrate and IntersectionAll.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that a contribution of £2756 be made to the event.*

6) Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey –

Further to its approval in principle subject to costings on 07/03, a bid towards the costs of putting hard standing underneath one of the two Basketball hoops in Hawthorn Park, Taunton. (Quotation - £2504)

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

7) Cllr Tom Deakin -

A bid for the costs of installing one new General Purpose Bin in front of the Community Centre in Wilton and Sherford area at a cost of £1000, which would cover the installation plus a year of emptying.

RECOMMENDATION: *The Standing Committee recommended that the bid be approved in full.*

Other business considered at the Standing Committee on 07/06:

Attendees:

Cllr S Coles, L Lisgo, M Peters, S Lees, R Lees, D Perry, Cllr T Deakin.

Cllr R Lees was a substitute for Cllr C Booth

Cllr C Ellis and Cllr H Prior-Sankey also attended as well as representatives from each bidder.

- 1) Appointment of Chair – Councillor Simon Coles was appointed.
- 2) Declarations of Interest – Cllr T Deakin – Personal - Trustee Red Start Learning Partnership
- 3) Requests for Civic Hospitality – None. Freedom Parade Request unlikely due to the War in Ukraine.
- 4) Provisionally Committed Costs Outstanding – An update was given on those outstanding, which related mostly to transfers for work completed by the Street Scene/External Ops Team.

5) Any Other Business – It was agreed that future meetings would be held in The Deane House, with hybrid capacity.

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	As part of the bid process, all Charter Trustees have been made aware of the bids.	2022
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £12,045.70	
Unitary Council and s24 Direction implications	N/A	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact		
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

Any conflicts of interest declared by Executive PFH, Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.

N/a

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: Councillor Benet Allen (PFH – Corporate Resources)

Date: 08/06/22

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by the SWT Executive PFH following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –
governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

The Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton

Powers and Duties of the Standing Committee

A Standing Committee of seven Members representing Wards in the Unparished Area of Taunton will be appointed by the Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton. Membership of the Standing Committee will reflect the political balance in the Unparished Area.

The Standing Committee will act on behalf of the Charter Trustees to:-

- 1 Select annually, for election by the Charter Trustees, the Mayor and a Deputy Mayor of Taunton and ensure a smooth transition of responsibility in the event of the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor being unable, for any reason, to complete his or her term of office, according to the following criteria:-

Candidates for the roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be drawn from the 16 Charter Trustees. Nominations must be supported by the signatures of at least two fellow Charter Trustees on a form to be provided by the Clerk to the Charter Trustees. There will be no canvassing after nominations have closed.

The Standing Committee will expect to receive at least one valid nomination for each office during the month of February. If one or more nominations are received for the same office the final decision will rest with the full body of the Charter Trustees. Each Charter Trustee will have one vote. The Standing Committee will have the responsibility for resolving all issues relating to the selection of a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor.

The Charter Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that all potential candidates are given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to maintain the high standard of the Office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Candidates must represent a Ward in the Unparished Area of Taunton. They must have served at least three years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Mayor and two years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Deputy Mayor.

In February the Clerk will write to all those who meet the criteria asking if they wish to be considered. The announcements will normally be made in March, except during an election year, when the selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be delayed until after the local elections.

If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is unable to complete his/her term of office and stands down, the procedure detailed above will be followed but the timescale will be adjusted to permit the Clerk to write immediately to all those who meet the criteria asking if they wish to be considered and the announcement will be made as soon as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor (as the case may be) has been elected.

If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is unable to fulfil his/her role but does not wish to stand down, after six weeks of incapacity the Standing Committee will be asked to consider whether or not the Mayor or (as may be the case) Deputy Mayor should remain in office and after twelve weeks of incapacity the term of office of the Mayor or (as the case may be) Deputy Mayor shall automatically terminate, unless the Standing Committee considers that there are extenuating circumstances.

- 2 Prepare and recommend to the Charter Trustees, the civic estimates and further required funding for the following Year.
- 3 Deal, in principle, with requests for civic hospitality.
- 4 Give advice or guidance to, and ensure the provision of proper support for, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor whenever appropriate.
- 5 Prepare and recommend to the Charter Trustees policies with regard to:-
 - A Civic twinning;
 - B Civic representation at community events; and
 - C The holding, safety, curation and care of all items of civic property which has been given to the Charter Trustees by Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 6 (i) Consider applications from Charter Trustees or Community Groups in the Unparished Area of Taunton for grant funding towards projects or schemes which will be of benefit to residents of the Unparished Area. The funding is currently derived from the Special Expenses Precept levied on Council Tax payers in the Unparished Area. The Charter Trustee who has made an application will be expected to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee to present his/her application and be 'on hand' to respond to questions or queries Members of the Standing Committee might have. A representative(s) of a Community Group will similarly be expected to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee to present their application.

(ii) Recommend to the Mayor of Taunton whether funding should be awarded for the projects or schemes which have been considered. Circulate the Mayor's decisions to all Members of the Charter Trustees.
- 7 Delegate to the Clerk to the Charter Trustees such tasks and responsibilities as are necessary for him/her to provide the required support to the Charter Trustees.
- 8 Deal with all other matters falling within the powers and duties of the Charter Trustees, except for those matters reserved for decision by the full body of the Charter Trustees as specified in 'The Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton - Functions and Responsibilities'.

Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21 in respect of Taunton Charter Trustees OT0067

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

External auditor report 2020/21

On 29 September 2021, we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2021. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review.

The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 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.

As reported in last year's external auditor report, the smaller authority did not arrange for an independent internal auditor to review the internal controls and give their conclusion in the Annual Internal Audit Report during 2020/21 and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 6. It has also disclosed that it took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 7, which, on the basis of the above, is not correct. We note that an internal audit did take place during the 2021/22 year, in respect of the 2020/21 AGAR.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR:

- Section 2, Box 1 for the current year has been incorrectly completed and should read £69,436.
- An amount of £34,614 has been included as staff costs in Section 2, Box 4. However, as the smaller authority does not have any employees of its own, these costs should have been included in Box 6, all other payments. Section 2, Boxes 4 and 6 for the current year should read £0 and £111,905 respectively.

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

Accountants &
business advisers

The minute references in respect of the approval of Sections 1 and 2 have not been included on the AGAR. The smaller authority has confirmed that these should be 21 and 22 respectively and from this we can see that the Sections have been approved in the correct order in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The smaller authority should ensure in future that the minute references are included on the AGAR form.

The prior year (2019/20) was the first year of operation for the Taunton Charter Trustees. In its first year the new authority was given control of a budget of £132,936 by the District Council, of which £63,500 was spent in the year. For the 2020/21 year there was a change in governance arrangements whereby a precept was paid with all expenditure for that year to be paid from the precept. Under the new arrangements the surplus from the 2019/20 year was required to be repaid to the District Council. This was done during the 2020/21 year and the £69,436 repayment is included in the current year Box 6 figure.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 5, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. The internal auditor has drawn attention to the same matter in the annual internal audit report and their detailed report.

External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

PKF Littlejohn LLP

PKF Littlejohn LLP

15/02/2022

Mr M Prouse
Taunton Charter Trustees
c/o Somerset West and Taunton Council
Deane House
Belvedere Road
TA1 1HE

Our ref OT0067
SAAA ref SB10155

Email sba@pkf-l.com

22 February 2022

Dear Mr Prouse

Taunton Charter Trustees

Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2021

We have completed our review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Taunton Charter Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021. On 29 September 2021, we issued an 'interim' report in respect of our review of Taunton Charter Trustees's AGAR for the year ended 31 March 2021. We explained the reasons that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now able to certify completion of the review. The final external auditor report and certificate is included for your attention as another attachment to the email containing this letter, along with a copy of Sections 1 and 2, on which our report is based, and a copy of our 'interim' Section 3 report. The smaller authority must consider the final external auditor report and decide what, if any, action is required.

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

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

- Prepare a "Notice of conclusion of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements. We attach a pro forma notice you may use for this purpose.
- Publish the "Notice" along with the AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) and our attached final report and certificate before 30 September (or as soon as possible where this date has passed), which must include publication on the smaller authority's website. (Please note that when the statute and regulations were amended in 2014 and 2015, they did not include a requirement for the length of time that for which the Notice must be published. There is no requirement for the Notice to be publicly accessible for 5 years, as there is for the AGAR and the external auditor report and certificate. The previous statute required 14 days; but it is now up to the authority to make this decision).
- Keep copies of the AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) and the attached final report and certificate available for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.

- Ensure that Sections 1, 2 and 3, plus the attached final report and certificate, of the published AGAR remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication.

Fee

Where applicable, we enclose our second fee note for the review, which is in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. Please arrange for this to be paid **at the earliest opportunity** as well as the first fee note which was issued with our 'interim' external auditor report.

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

- we were required to issue chaser letters and/or exercise our statutory powers due to a failure to provide an AGAR; or
- we had to seek clarification and/or correction to supporting documentation due to a mistake or omission by the smaller authority; or
- it was necessary for us to undertake additional work.

Please return the remittance advice with your payment, which should be sent to: PKF Littlejohn LLP, Ref: Credit Control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4HD. Please include the reference OT0067 or Taunton Charter Trustees as a reference when paying by BACS.

Feedback on 2020/21

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

Yours sincerely



PKF Littlejohn LLP

Taunton Charter Trustees

Notice of conclusion of audit Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2021

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

<p>1. The audit of accounts for Taunton Charter Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021 has been completed and the accounts have been published.</p> <p>2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Taunton Charter Trustees on application to:</p> <p>(a) _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>(b) _____ _____ _____</p> <p>3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £_____ (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.</p> <p>Announcement made by: (d) _____</p> <p>Date of announcement: (e) _____</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years.</p> <p>(a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR</p> <p>(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised</p> <p>(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs</p> <p>(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice</p> <p>(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice</p>
--	--

Mr M Prouse
Taunton Charter Trustees
c/o Somerset West and Taunton Council
Deane House
Belvedere Road
TA1 1HE

Our ref OT0067
SAAA ref SB10155
Invoice no: SB20214484

VAT no: GB 440 4982 50

Email sba@pkf-l.com

22 February 2022

INVOICE

Professional services rendered in connection with the following:

Limited assurance review of Annual Governance & Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2021

Additional charges (where applicable) as detailed on attached appendix A

Additional fees (where applicable) as detailed by separate cover £0.00

TOTAL NET £0.00

VAT @ 20% £0.00

TOTAL PAYABLE £0.00

PAYMENT IS DUE ON RECEIPT OF INVOICE

For payments by cheque, please return the remittance advice with your payment to:
PKF Littlejohn LLP, Credit Control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD

For payments by credit transfer, our bank details are:-

HSBC Bank plc Sort Code: 40-02-31

Account number: 11070797

Account Name: PKF Littlejohn LLP

Please include OT0067 or Taunton Charter Trustees as the reference.

For account queries, contact creditcontrol@pkf-l.com.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7516 2200 • www.pkf-l.com

PKF Littlejohn LLP • 15 Westferry Circus • Canary Wharf • London E14 4HD

PKF Littlejohn LLP, Chartered Accountants. A list of members' names is available at the above address. PKF Littlejohn LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales No. OC342572. Registered office as above. PKF Littlejohn LLP is a member firm of the PKF International Limited family of legally independent firms and does not accept any responsibility or liability for the actions or inactions of any individual member or correspondent firm or firms.

Mr M Prouse
Taunton Charter Trustees
c/o Somerset West and Taunton Council
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TA1 1HE

Our ref: OT0067
SAAA ref: SB10155
Invoice no: SB20214484

VAT no: GB 440 4982 50

Email: sba@pkf-l.com

22 February 2022

REMITTANCE ADVICE

Professional services rendered in connection with the following:

Limited assurance review of Annual Governance & Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2021

Additional charges (where applicable) as detailed on attached appendix A

Additional fees (where applicable) as detailed by separate cover £0.00

TOTAL NET £0.00

VAT @ 20% £0.00

TOTAL PAYABLE £0.00

PAYMENT IS DUE ON RECEIPT OF INVOICE

**For payments by cheque, please return the remittance advice with your payment to:
PKF Littlejohn LLP, Credit Control (SBA), 5th Floor, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf,
London E14 4HD**

For payments by credit transfer, our bank details are:-

HSBC Bank plc Sort Code: 40-02-31

Account number: 11070797

Account Name: PKF Littlejohn LLP

Please include OT0067 or Taunton Charter Trustees as the reference.

For account queries, contact creditcontrol@pkf-l.com.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON

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 2021, that:

	Agreed		Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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.
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
			✓

*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:

29/06/2021

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE N/A

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED S LEO

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED MR

Somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/year-council/charter-trustees/

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	0	0	<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>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	0	51,145	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	132,936	0	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	0	34,614	<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>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	63,500	77,292	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	69,436	8,676	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	69,436	8,676	<i>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.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	142,958	142,958	<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>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
		✓	<i>N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 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]

Date

18/06/21

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

29/06/21

as recorded in minute reference:

N/A

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

[Signature]

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

Taunton Charter Trustees - OT0067

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2020/21

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 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.

The smaller authority has submitted its AGAR and supporting documentation prior to 30 September 2021; however, we have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements. Once we have completed our review a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters.

An invoice for the statutory annual review fee (and chaser letter charges where they apply) has been issued with this interim certificate. This interim invoice may be settled prior to us certifying completion and issuing our final report and certificate. Should we receive challenge correspondence before we have certified completion, any additional fees arising from additional work required as a result of that correspondence will be invoiced with the certificate of completion; where no additional fees apply a zero invoice will be issued on completion.

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

Please see above.

3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We 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 2021

We do not certify completion because:

we have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

29/09/2021

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON

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 2022, that:

	Agreed		‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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.
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
			✓

*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:

21/06/2022

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chairman

Clerk

NR

somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/charter-trustees

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

As you will see I have suggested a response on the Statement as a negative.

Section 5 – Risk – No

- *“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.”*

Yes means that this Authority:

- *“Considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.”*

If the Authority responds as No on this item – we are required to provide explanations to the External Auditor on a separate sheet and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified.

As part of our Internal Audit last year it was identified that there had been non-compliance in respect of this as there had been no minuted reference to risk, however Councillors had felt that they had been made aware of any risks they faced as Charter Trustees and this is as per the Minutes;

“The discussion on risks to the Charter Trustees had felt to be considered but this would need to be formally recorded in a Risk Register.”

Our External Auditor recognised that in the 20/21 Final Report and Certificate

“The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 5, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. The internal auditor has drawn attention to the same matter in the annual internal audit report and their detailed report.”

There were a number of other observations identified in the Internal Audit, some of which have been addressed e.g. approving a budget before the precept, and some of which have proved more difficult to address, because of the relationship between the District Council and Charter Trustees who are not a Parish/Town Council but charged with continuing the historic Mayoralty. Officer capacity this year has also been prioritised to the delivery of the Community Governance Review for Taunton Project.

It is **recommended**;

- a) That a Draft Action Plan and Draft Risk Register is circulated to the Charter Trustees and then taken to a Special Meeting of the Charter Trustees in July 2022 to ensure compliance for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

M. Prouse – Specialist – 13/06/22

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	
1. Balances brought forward	69,436	8676	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	51,145	52,819	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	0	0	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	0	0	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	111,905	56,809	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	8676	4686	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	8676	0	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	142,958	142,958	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).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	N/A
			✓
			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 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

NR

Date

13/06/2022

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

DD/MM/YY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Smaller authority name: **THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON**

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

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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

NOTICE	NOTES
<p>1. Date of announcement 22nd June 2022 (a)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 2022, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</p> <p>(b) Marcus Prouse – Specialist – Governance – m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk</p> <p>commencing on (c) Wednesday 22 June 2022</p> <p>and ending on (d) Friday 22 July 2022</p> <p>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and• 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. <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team) 15 Westferry Circus Canary Wharf London E14 4HD (sba@pkf-l.com)</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) Marcus Prouse – Specialist – Governance m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk</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>

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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 2022 for 2021/22 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 <i>Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return</i> .
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