**Kelbrook and Sough Parish Council**

**1. Welcome**

The Chairperson Cllr Ashley welcomes all to the meeting

5 members of the public present

The meeting is being live-streamed. Kelbrook and Sough Parish Council have a Filming policy, which requires that anyone filming needs to stay with filming equipment. Filming **must stop** when the meeting is finished.

**2. Attendance, Apologies and Non-attendance**

To record, accept or otherwise, attendance, apologies for absence and non-attendance

**Present :** Chairperson Ashley, Cllrs. Katiff, Mayers, Slinger, Elley, Ellis, Galway

**Apologies** : None

**Clerk** : Carole Singleton

**3. Declarations of Interest**

None declared

**4. AGAR 2021/2022**

The purpose of the AGAR (Annual Governance Accountability Return) is to report publicly on the extent to which the Council complies with its own local code of governance. The AGAR underpins the account and audit regulations and allows councils and parish councils to demonstrate its stewardship of public funds, adherence to financial regulations whilst demonstrating governance and accountability.

Chairman: Sharon Ashley

Locum Clerk: Carole Singleton

Email: clerk@kelbrookandsoughparishcouncil.org.uk

Website: [www.kelbrookandsoughparishcouncil.uk.uk](http://www.kelbrookandsoughparishcouncil.uk.uk)

Kelbrook and Sough Council's Annual Governance Statement provides assurances over the Council's Governance arrangements, together with identifying areas of future focus and improvement.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts,

 Part 1. The Annual Internal Audit Report must be completed by the authority’s internal auditor (currently Yorkshire Internal Audit) Part 2. Sections 1 and 2 must be completed and approved by the authority. Part 3. Section 3 is completed by the external auditor (PKF Littlejohn) and will be returned to the authority.

The Parish Council is unable to declare as exempt in 2022/23 due to the AGAR not being completed 2021/2022. This resulted in a public interest report being produced by PKF Littlejohn, the Government appointed auditors. This determined the Parish Council could not claim exemption for 2022/23. The internal audit should take place in April, however, this had not been booked or internal auditor appointed.

The AGAR for 2021/2022 was subsequently submitted 2023 to the external auditors, this incurred late fees and fines totally £280. The AGAR for 2021/2022 concluded on 9th May 2023. The Parish Council is looking at completing the recommended actions by September.

**5. AGAR 2022/23**

The local elections In May 2023 meant Kelbrook and Sough Parish Council could not meet the July deadline for submitting the 2022/2023 AGAR. The Chair contacted PKF Littlejohn and explained the situation resulting in an extra month to submit. The Internal audit was completed therefore Parish Council are able to complete the AGAR and submit within the permitted timescale. The Internal Report from Yorkshire Internal Audit is available to view at - <https://www.kelbrookandsoughparishcouncil.org.uk/finance.php>

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| **AGAR 2022/2023** | **Findings of internal auditor** |
|  We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. | No |
| We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. | No evidence of internal controls - Minutes must be accurate recording of evidence. |
| 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 | Infringement with employment law. - 1. clerk started in June 2022 with no contract till Feb 2023
2. Clerk not paid till April 2023.
3. confidential information regarding the clerk was discussed in a public meeting this should not happen
 |
| We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. | Not met |
| 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. | No. There were no risk assessments in place and th egparish Council had not addressed previous AGAR findings |
| We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems | Yes - the internal auditor was brought in  |
| We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit | no risk assessment in place and not addressed from 2019 |
| 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 | No - due to 1. lack of proper financial decision around setting the precept budget
2. no discussion - not taking into account reserves, instead the parish council matched the previous figures
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**Points to note -**

* The Parish Council will be looking to address previous failings
* The figures at the start of the year and the end of year have flagged up variances. PKF Littlejohn now require detailed explanations for the variances, along with an explanation why the parish council is carrying such high reserves
* There is VAT to be claimed back
* A stringent plan is required or there may be a risk of monies being clawed back, however, this offers an opportunity to get everything up to the required standards
* If the 2022/2023 AGAR and subsequent explanations can be returned by 31 7 23 the parish council should not incur any penalties
* The AGAR on the website will be replace by the updated AGAR forms once these are returned by PKF Littlejohn. AGAR parts 1,2,and 3 must be published by 30th September
* To ensure the parish council does not encounter any further late submissions and incur additional unnecessary costs, the internal auditor will be booked for April 2024.
* The clerk has prepared a notice of concussion of audit. This will be published. The notice gives statutory time for interested persons to look at the documentation.

**6. Reserves budget**

Discussed at last meeting.

* Some payments for 2022 did not get paid until April 2023 The clerk salary will show next year and will impact on the ~AGAR for 2023/24
* Election costs - these are still an unknown
* Benches - noted that vat can be claimed back
* Notice boards - still awaiting a price,
* £2000 toward Sough Park changing rooms and toilets
* Lunches budget
* Maintenance budget - includes lengths man salary, materials
* Money towards small grants
* Money to the church for lighting
* Christmas trees - get prices for next meeting
* Year 24/25, 25/26, 26/27 top up £3000 per year to prevent putting the precept up
* Small grants - could this be increased when the VAT reimbursement is back?
* Once the VAT comes back it can be reallocated
* Reserves money
* Look at spending against budget headings. Use this information to set the precept budget
* Needs to claim VAT reimbursement 2021 21/22 and 22/23. Recommendations from previous audit - add vat column to accounts - this had been started.
* The parish council can continue to use the village hall as an address

**7. Clerk**

Recommendations regarding recruitment of the clerk -

* 12 hours a month is not sufficient - 5 hours per week recommended on pay scale 13-17 (as per NALC).
* Previous clerk was on pay scale point 35, auditor was shocked it was more than anticipated and important to note this figure was not set by the clerk herself.
* Locum clerk has agreed to become permanent clerk.

Next Kelbrook and Sough Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th September at 7:00 at Kelbrook Village Hall

Meeting concluded - 19:40pm