

Councillors are hereby summoned, and members of the public and press are invited, to attend a meeting of the **Full Council** to be held on **Monday 26 June 2023**, commencing at 18.45, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

Note:

- **Members of the public who wish to view the meeting proceedings, either in real time or afterwards, can access the meeting through the following link:**
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTA9K-7L4Onjcli2Gtz7tCg>

K. Sheehan, Town Clerk (signed on original)
20 June 2023

Agenda

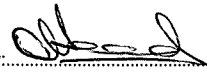
Open Forum: Questions may be put to the Council in person during this Public Participation Session of up to 15 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes per person. Issues notified to the Clerk a minimum of 3 working days before the meeting (i.e., by 5pm on the preceding Wednesday) will receive a response during this session. Issues raised in this session without prior notice may be referred to the Clerk to respond to within 10 working days or listed on a subsequent agenda.

1. **To note apologies for absence.**
2. **Declarations of interest** in items on the agenda.
3. **To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meeting** held on 22 May 2023.
4. **To receive reports from the Unitary Councillors and Local Community Network representative.**
5. **Clerk's progress report:** to receive an update report (for information).
6. **Finance:**
 - a. To approve the accounts for payment for June 2023 as listed.
 - b. To report the bank reconciliation for May 2023 has been completed.
 - c. To receive the second report of the Internal Auditor.
 - d. To formally approve the internally audited accounts for 2022/23
 - e. To approve the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2023:
 - i. Section 1: to approve the Annual Governance Statements.
 - ii. Section 2: to approve the Accounting Statements.
 - iii. To receive the Internal Auditor's Audit report.
 - iv. To authorise the signatures of the Mayor and Clerk.
7. **Governance:**
 - a. To adopt an updated Equality and Diversity Policy.
 - b. To adopt a Customer Service Policy.
8. **Queen Elizabeth II commemoration:** to consider suggestions to commemorate the late Queen.

9. **Local Council Award Scheme:** to note this Council's intention to apply for Quality Council status.
10. **Bincombe Beeches:** to consider a proposal regarding an activity day based at Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve.
11. **Youth Outreach:** to receive a report from the youth outreach team on ongoing work at Happy Valley.
12. **Local Nature Reserve:** to receive a progress report regarding the proposed Local Nature Reserve at Kithill.
13. **To confirm dates for the annual Lighting Up and Christmas Market:** to confirm lighting up on 24th November, but also to consider holding the Christmas Market on either Saturday 18th or Saturday 25th November 2023.
14. **To receive the following minutes and approve any recommendations contained therein:**
 - a. Planning & Highways Committee 24 April 2023.
 - b. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 18 April 2023.
 - c. Amenities Committee 15 May 2023.
 - d. Joint Burial Committee 3 April 2023.
 - e. Policy & Resources Committee 13 February 2023.
 - f. Youth Steering Group 20 March 2023.
 - g. Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies.
15. **To receive Matters of Report (for information only).**
16. **Next meeting:** Monday 24 July 2023 at 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

This meeting will be followed by a short meeting of the War Memorial Commemoration Trust (see separate agenda).

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - JUNE 26th 2023

Checked by: 

Date: 20.6.23

Chq No.	Gross	Vat	Net	Payee	Description
O P Jun 1	£32.49		£32.49	Hewitt, P	Expenses
O P Jun 2	£19.30		£19.30	Wilson, D	Expenses
O P Jun 3	£1.35		£1.35	Goddard, A	Expenses
O P Jun 4	£6.00		£6.00	Warren, L	Expenses
O P Jun 5	£51.66	£6.22	£45.44	Sheehan, K	Expenses
O P Jun 6	£250.00		£250.00	Creation Generation	Coronation event entertainment
O P Jun 7	£25.00		£25.00	Henhayes Centre	Coronation event electricity usage
O P Jun 8	£600.00		£600.00	Active Learning & Skills	Coronation event entertainment
O P Jun 9	£2,994.00	£499.00	£2,495.00	Archiwest	Cemetery Lodge survey
DD59	£374.89	£17.85	£357.04	British Gas Business	Gas GRC 1 - 19/4/23
DD26	£270.36	£12.87	£257.49	British Gas Business	Gas Town Hall 1/4 - 1/5/23
DD52	£242.51	£40.42	£202.09	Gamma Business Communications L	Telephone & broadband May 23
DD31	£7.77	£1.29	£6.48	Iris Business Software Ltd	Payroll payslip software Apr 23
DD48	£56.36	£2.68	£53.68	British Gas Business	Electricity Lodge office 14/4 - 15/5/23
DD60	£63.50	£3.02	£60.48	British Gas Business	Gas Lodge office 14/4 - 14/5/23
DD30	£127.50	£6.07	£121.43	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Public Toilets 12/4 - 26/4/23
DD59	£367.87	£17.52	£350.35	British Gas Business	Gas GRC 20/4 - 15/5/23
DD33 C.Card	£4.49	£0.75	£3.74	Amazon Marketplace	Mobile phone screen protector
O P Jun 6a	£136.72	£22.79	£113.93	Boilerman Ltd	Lodge office boiler repair
O P Jun 7a	£180.00	£30.00	£150.00	Yeovil Driver Training Ltd	Grounds man trailer driving training
O P Jun 8a	£4,250.57		£4,250.57	SCC Pension Fund	Pension Contributions May 23
O P Jun 9a	£3,416.99		£3,416.99	HM Revenue & Customs	Tax & NI Contributions May 23
O P Jun 10	£869.28	£144.88	£724.40	Poole Harold	GRC air conditioning electrical work
O P Jun 11	£273.00	£45.50	£227.50	Poole Harold	Lodge office EIC report
O P Jun 12	£537.60	£89.60	£448.00	Guy Trevor-Jones Professional Fencin	Henhayes fence repair
O P Jun 13	£103.80	£17.30	£86.50	Sovereign Fire & Security	GRC Intruder/Fire alarm/CCTV maintenance May 23
O P Jun 13	£201.00	£33.50	£167.50	Sovereign Fire & Security	GRC Intruder alarm call out maintenance
O P Jun 14	£1,530.17		£1,530.17	Active Learning & Skills	Provision of Youth Service May 23
O P Jun 15	£48.00	£8.00	£40.00	Paperchase Recycling	Cemetery general waste collection Apr 23
O P Jun 15	£204.00	£34.00	£170.00	Paperchase Recycling	Coronation event general waste collection
O P Jun 16	£345.83	£57.64	£288.19	Ricoh Uk Ltd	Photocopier/printer May - Jul 23
O P Jun 17	£1,000.80	£166.80	£834.00	D.C.Allen	Happy Valley fence installation
O P Jun 18	£104.93	£17.49	£87.44	Wilson, Daniel	Expenses - plants for lodge office
DD44	£294.94		£294.94	Everflow	Water rates Jun 23
DD55	£370.00		£370.00	Somerset Council	Council tax Lodge office Jun 23
DD31	£17.38	£2.90	£14.48	Iris Business Software Ltd	Payroll Auto enrolment software Apr 23
DD21	£40.61	£1.93	£38.68	British Gas Business	Electricity Happy Valley floodlights 18/4 - 8/5/23
DD33 C.Card	-£37.38	-£6.23	-£31.15	Lamp Shop Online	CREDIT for lightbulbs not received
DD17b	£12.19	£0.58	£11.61	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Street lighting Henhayes 21/4 - 21/5/23
DD17c	£13.72	£0.65	£13.07	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Street lighting Middle Path 21/4 - 21/5/23
DD13	£1,573.46		£1,573.46	Aviva Credit Services UK Ltd	Insurance Jun 23
DD2	£1,234.00		£1,234.00	Somerset Council	Rates Town Hall/Victoria Hall Jun 23
DD20	£309.00		£309.00	Somerset Council	Rates Cemetery Chapels Jun 23
DD51	£649.00		£649.00	Somerset Council	Rates GRC Jun 23
DD22	£9.19	£0.44	£8.75	British Gas Business	Gas Victoria Hall 12/4 - 17/5/23
DD33 C.Card	£30.00		£30.00	Art4All	Prizes for Coronation event competition
DD27	£69.07	£3.29	£65.78	Eon	Electricity Victoria Hall 2/5 - 11/5/23
DD27	£261.23	£12.44	£248.79	Eon	Electricity Victoria Hall 1/4 - 1/5/23
DD33 C.Card	£52.35		£52.35	Amazon Marketplace	Mobile phone for Operations Manager
O P Jun 19	£48.00	£8.00	£40.00	Paperchase Recycling	Cemetery general waste collection May 23
O P Jun 19	£81.60	£13.60	£68.00	Paperchase Recycling	GRC general waste collection Apr - May 23
O P Jun 20	£1,488.00	£248.00	£1,240.00	Fern Garden Tree Services	Cemetery grass cutting May 23
O P Jun 20	£682.21	£113.70	£568.51	Fern Garden Tree Services	Cemetery tree work
O P Jun 21	£276.88	£46.15	£230.73	Boilerman Ltd	GRC toilet repairs
O P Jun	£180.00	£30.00	£150.00	Pear Technology Services Ltd	Mapping software 1/6 - 31/5/23
O P Jun 23	£212.25	£11.00	£201.25	Worknest	Employment insurance 1/6/23 - 31/5/24
O P Jun 23	£1,474.20	£245.70	£1,228.50	Worknest	Employment law 1/6/23 - 31/5/24
O P Jun 24	£5,820.00	£970.00	£4,850.00	J N R Ltd	Balance for GRC air conditioning installation
O P Jun 25	£7.52	£1.25	£6.27	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Hand saw
O P Jun 25	£86.52	£14.42	£72.10	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Chapel bell rope

Signed:..... Date:.....

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - JUNE 26th 2023

Checked by: 

Date: 20.6.23

O P Jun 25	£12.79	£2.13	£10.66	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Postcrete
O P Jun 26	£791.50		£791.50	M C Commercial Cleaning	Cleaning May 23
O P Jun 26	£400.00		£400.00	M C Commercial Cleaning	GRC cleaning May 23
O P Jun 27	£410.00		£410.00	Footprintz	Neighbourhood Plan printing
O P Jun 28	£1,085.34	£180.89	£904.45	Edge Designs	Playgrounds software installation & training
DD33 C.Card	£77.82	£12.97	£64.85	Easy Lightbulbs	Fluorescent tubes
DD47	£504.78	£84.13	£420.65	Biffa	Grounds skip exchange
DD47	£42.44	£7.07	£35.37	Biffa	Grounds skip hire Apr 23
DD33 C.Card	£35.14	£5.86	£29.28	Amazon Marketplace	First aid kits
DD33 C.Card	£17.98	£3.00	£14.98	Amazon Marketplace	Whiteboard pens
DD33 C.Card	£4.59	£0.77	£3.82	Amazon Marketplace	Whiteboard eraser
DD33 C.Card	£5.99	£1.00	£4.99	Amazon Marketplace	Stationery
DD33 C.Card	£3.99	£0.67	£3.32	Amazon Marketplace	Whiteboard tape
DD47	£48.73	£8.12	£40.61	Biffa	Grounds maint skip hire May 23
DD30	£97.94	£4.66	£93.28	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Public Toilets 27/4- 26/5/23
DD23	£338.35	£16.11	£322.24	British Gas Business	Electricity Town Hall 20/4 - 20/5/23
DD46	£136.80	£22.80	£114.00	Somerset Web Services Lrd	Email hosting Jun 23
DD53	£26.76	£4.46	£22.30	O2	Mobile broadband charges May 23
DD33 C.Card	£3.00		£3.00	Land Registry	Land search
DD49	£241.01	£40.16	£200.85	The Business	Fuel May 23
	-£4.67	-£0.22	-£4.45	British Gas Business	Electricity Lodge office 28/2 - 13/4/23 CREDIT
DD33 C.Card	£16.13	£2.69	£13.44	Amazon Marketplace	Extension lead/Stationery
DD33 C.Card	£11.31	£1.89	£9.42	Amazon Marketplace	Wall clock
DD33 C.Card	£10.94	£1.83	£9.11	Amazon Marketplace	Cutlery tray
DD33 C.Card	£9.48	£1.58	£7.90	Amazon Marketplace	Wall mounted document holder
DD33 C.Card	£12.27	£2.05	£10.22	Amazon Marketplace	Accident report book
DD33 C.Card	£11.42	£1.91	£9.51	Amazon Marketplace	Stationery
DD33 C.Card	£49.71	£8.29	£41.42	Amazon Marketplace	Label machine
DD33 C.Card	£36.99	£6.17	£30.82	Amazon Marketplace	Whiteboard
DD57	£249.74	£41.62	£208.12	British Telecom	Telehone & broadband GRC
DD50	£834.48	£139.08	£695.40	British Gas Business	Electricity GRC May 23
DD48	£47.09	£2.24	£44.85	British Gas Business	Electricity Lodge office 15/5 - 12/6/23
DD60	£114.24	£5.44	£108.80	British Gas Business	Gas Lodge office 14/4 - 12/6/23
DD43	£13.67		£13.67	Lloyds Bank	Bank charges May 23
DD26	£92.50	£4.40	£88.10	British Gas Business	Gas Town Hall 2/5 - 1/6/23
DD31	£17.38	£2.90	£14.48	Iris Business Software Ltd	Payroll Auto enrolment software May 23
DD9	£61.98	£10.33	£51.65	Southern Communications	Mobile phone charges Jun 23
DD52	£276.43	£46.07	£230.36	Gamma Business Communications L	Telephone & broadband Jun 23
DD27	£166.58	£7.93	£158.65	E. O N	Electricity Victoria Hall 12/5 - 31/5/23
O P Jun 29	£800.00		£800.00	Stewart, Simon	Delivery of Neighbourhood plan
O P Jun 31	£65.33	£10.89	£54.44	Bradfords	Grounds PPE/Flexi tub
O P Jun 31	£6.35	£1.06	£5.29	Bradfords	Postcrete
O P Jun 31	£27.69	£4.62	£23.07	Bradfords	Henhayes bin fixings
O P Jun 31	£63.73	£10.62	£53.11	Bradfords	GRC maintenance
O P Jun 31	£23.36	£3.90	£19.46	Bradfords	GRC maintenance
O P Jun 32	£103.80	£17.30	£86.50	Sovereign Fire & Security	Intruder/Fire alarm/CCTV maintenance Jun 23
O P Jun 33	£1,466.04	£244.34	£1,221.70	Edge Designs	Finance/Cemetery software support 28/7/23 - 27/7/24
O P Jun 34	£692.94	£115.49	£577.45	Garage Floors Direct	Cemetery workshop floor tiles
O P Jun 35	£150.00		£150.00	Steven Mansfield	Cemetery Chapel lightning conductor test
O P Jun 36	£251.00		£251.00	Society Of Local Council Clerks	Membership fee deputy clerk
O P Jun 37	£22.00	£3.67	£18.33	Allen Computer Services	Printer cartridge
O P Jun 38	£95.00		£95.00	Institute of Cemetery & Crem Mangm	Annual membership 23/24
	£12,395.72		£12,395.72	Salaries	May-23
	£11,792.22		£11,792.22	Salaries	Jun-23
Total	£68,221.48	£4,085.90	£64,135.58		

Signed:..... Date:.....

CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 31/05/2023			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		£353,547.28
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/05/2023		£547,732.62
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/05/2023		£109,883.83
A	CASH IN HAND 31/05/23 (per Cash Book)		£791,396.07
	Cash in Hand per Bank Statements 31st May 2023		
	LLOYDS - Business Call Account	£634,303.58 ✓	
	LLOYDS - Current Account	£50,000.00 ✓	
	LLOYDS - Burial Account	£107,592.49 ✓	
			£791,896.07
	Less unrepresented cheques		
	9591	£500.00	£500.00
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	ADJUSTED BANK BALANCE		£791,396.07
	A = B Checks out OK		
	Town Clerk: <i>[Signature]</i>		
	Date: <i>14th June 2023</i>		
	Checked by: <i>[Signature]</i>		
	Date: <i>20.6.23</i>		



FINAL

Internal audit report 2022/23

Visit 2 of 2

CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 17th June 2023

Report author: R Darkin-Miller
Email: r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk

Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Crewkerne Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 24th May 2023.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Crewkerne Town Council's bespoke Internal Audit programme, which is based largely on Appendix 9 of the 2014 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide' and supplemented by the additional tests required by later AGARs.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

The internal audit for 2022/23 has now been completed in accordance with the provisions of the Practitioners' Guide and the CIPFA code of internal audit practice.

Based on the sample testing carried out at this final audit visit and during the year, all of the Council's current financial controls appear to be operating effectively except for:

Test N: Publication

I checked to see that the Council complied with the publication requirements for the previous year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The Council had to publish before 01/07/22 and at least one day before the start of its public rights period (28/06/22) ss1&2 of the AGAR, and the public rights notice including a declaration that the accounting statements were unaudited. The Council has screenshots proving the upload date of the documents. The documents had to remain published for 30 working days. As at the audit date of 23/11/22, the public rights notice is still on the website, but ss1&2 of the AGAR were replaced by ss1-3 of the AGAR following the conclusion of the external audit, and there is no evidence of when ss1&2 were removed (although the date of removal is presumably the same as the date of the uploading of ss1-3).

On or before 30/09/22, the Council was required to publish the notice of conclusion of audit, and ss1-3 of the AGAR (including the completed external audit report). The required documents were uploaded on 21/09/22.

The evidence indicates that the Council complied with the publication requirements, but I cannot prove they did so with respect to the length of time the original ss1&2 of the AGAR were on the website. Consequently I have assessed this test as 'not covered'.

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.
Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	0
Low	0
Information	1
TOTAL	1

The number of recommendations made at all of the audit visits in 2022/23 and their priorities are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number		
	Visit 1	Visit 2	TOTAL
High	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0
Low	3	0	3
Information	0	1	1
TOTAL	3	1	4

I would like to thank Katharine Sheehan, Town Clerk and Paula Hewitt, Finance Officer for their assistance during this audit.

Darkin Miller ~ Chartered Accountants
2022/23 INTERNAL AUDIT OF CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL
FINAL REPORT VISIT 2 OF 2: 17th JUNE 2023

Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
5.1 – Miscoding in finance system (amended for AGAR)	I checked to see that a sample of income was properly recorded and promptly banked. I found that all samples were promptly banked, and 10/13 properly recorded. One burial fee £180 was coded in error to digging of plots, but as cemetery income is reported in total on the detailed financial statements, and all income other than precept is reported as 'other income' on the AGAR, this has no impact on detailed budget monitoring or reporting. 2/13 receipts were shown as income on Edge although both were bank transfers from third parties: the first relating to the closure of the Joint Burial Committee and its absorption of its operation and balances within the Town Council accounts, the second relating to the Council holding funds on behalf of a third party not-for-profit whose bank account was closed during the year. Both were included as income as this was the only way to bring the funds into the finance system, but both have been correctly excluded from income on the AGAR.	Info	Noted re coding error. We will ensure fees are correctly coded in future. Comments re consolidation of JBC accounts and holding of ABCD monies are noted.		

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Crewkerne Town Council

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE PAGE ADDRESS www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	N/A		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).			✓
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
	✓		

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

23/11/2022 24/05/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date 06/06/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).**

Internal Auditor note on test N:

I checked to see that the Council complied with the publication requirements for the previous year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The Council had to publish before 01/07/22 and at least one day before the start of its public rights period (28/06/22) ss1&2 of the AGAR, and the public rights notice including a declaration that the accounting statements were unaudited. The Council has screenshots proving the upload date of the documents. The documents had to remain published for 30 working days. As at the audit date of 23/11/22, the public rights notice is still on the website, but ss1&2 of the AGAR were replaced by ss1-3 of the AGAR following the conclusion of the external audit, and there is no evidence of when ss1&2 were removed (although the date of removal is presumably the same as the date of the uploading of ss1-3).

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The evidence indicates that the Council complied with the publication requirements, but I cannot prove they did so with respect to the length of time the original ss1&2 of the AGAR were on the website. Consequently I have assessed this test as 'not covered'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 06/06/2023

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Crewkerne Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

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

***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:

26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk PAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Crewkerne Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	292,164	289,899	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	440,037	466,525	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	92,442	109,976	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	186,353	219,415	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	348,392	331,032	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	289,899	315,952	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	272,680	353,547	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	6,902,543	6,909,581	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DD/MM/YYYY

Date

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

26/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



Equality & Diversity Policy

1) Introduction

i) Crewkerne Town Council is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

ii) We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

iii) The Town Clerk has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

iv) All councillors, employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Town Council.

v) Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Town Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with the senior management team, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Town Council.

2) Our Commitment as an Employer

i) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.

ii) Every councillor, employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

iii) Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.



iv) Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

v) We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

3) Our Commitment as a Service Provider

i) We aim to provide services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class.

ii) We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.

iii) This policy is fully supported by the town councillors.

iv) This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

v) We have clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

vi) Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Adopted at the meeting of Full Council on: 26 June 2023, Min. No.

This policy replaces the previous Equalities policy.

Review by: June 2027.

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

The Town Council's 'Customers' are mainly the residents of Crewkerne, but also includes anyone we are working with including contractors, funeral directors, suppliers and other authorities.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to set Customer Care Standards to ensure we remain focused on putting customers at the heart of everything we do and that we are dedicated to serving the needs of the community.

Summary

This policy sets out a framework of how Crewkerne Town Council will aim to deliver a high level of customer service to all and be responsive to the needs and expectations of the community within its powers and resources.

Customer Care Standards

Crewkerne Town Council makes the following Customer Care promises:

- Deal with enquires promptly and efficiently.
- Be polite, helpful and professional.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Signpost to the correct authority, if we are unable to help.
- Treat everyone fairly.
- Maintain confidentiality and only share information with permission.
- Keep residents informed by being open and accountable whilst ensuring all information published is clear, concise and widely available.
- Encourage good working relationships.
- Listen to comments and complaints.
- Provide training and development to employees and Councillors.
- Strive to continually improve the service we offer.
- Learn from mistakes.

Implementation

In order to keep these promises, Crewkerne Town Council will:

- Ensure all employees and Councillors are aware of the expected standards.
- Provide a training budget and encourage staff and Councillors to attend training.
- Provide clear information on Council services and how to contact the Council.
- Ensure individual needs are met by making any necessary adjustments.

- Provide details on how your information is used.
- Engage and work with the community to reach common goals.
- Monitor and respond to complaints, feedback and suggestions.
- Review this and other relevant policies and procedures to see how we can further improve.

To help us achieve our Customer Care standards we ask anyone contacting the Town Council to:

- Be courteous and respectful towards us.
- Provide us with the information we need.
- Let us know of any adjustments we can make to meet your individual needs.
- Give feedback and make suggestions on how we can improve.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- The Town Council Office in Town Hall is open Monday - Friday 9.30am-1.00pm and can provide a wide range of information about Council services Tel 01460 74001.
- The Town Council's website www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk which provides links to many other useful services, including services provided by Somerset Council.
- The Town Council Facebook page and Instagram page.

Version control:

Adopted by Full Council on 26th June 2023, Minute Ref:

Review by: June 2027.



SUPPORTING REPORTS TO FULL COUNCIL – 26 June 2023

Agenda Item 9: To note this Council's intention to apply for Quality Council status.

Background:

The Town Council's previous Quality Council accreditation expired in April 2021. The portfolio of supporting documentation is nearly ready to apply for the autumn assessment panel.

Cost implications:

There will be an initial registration fee of £50, followed by an assessment fee of £100.

Recommendation:

Councillors to confirm that they wish to proceed with:

- Application for Quality Status once portfolio is ready.
- Initial registration with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).



Agenda Item 11: To receive a report from the Town Council’s Youth Outreach team on ongoing work at Happy Valley.

Report for information only:

ALS report that:

The outreach work at Happy Valley has been going well, with some clear issues emerging and lots of engagement from children, young people & adults / parents.

They have also been able to link up with the Police which has been positive.

The “Planned Scattergun” approach of timings/days for visits has been working well with sessions taking place during tea time, early evening, later evening visits across most days of the week.

K Sheehan, Town Clerk, June 2023.

Agenda Item 12: To receive a progress report regarding the proposal of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at Kithill.

Background:

Space4Crewkerne put forward a proposal earlier in the year that the Kithill Wildlife site be upgraded to a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Recommendation:

Councillors to consider the next step after research carried out by Deputy Clerk:

- CTC contact landowners directly to see if they are open to the proposal, and to try to ascertain a cost for such a lease/agreement.
- Space4Crewkerne would like CTC to contact Somerset Council to request they proceed with establishing the LNR directly.

To consider:

Costs at this point are still unknown. The initial costs will include:

- Lease/agreement with landowner, and if not agreed the costs of compulsory purchase of land.
- Ongoing costs: to qualify as a LNR the site will need to be 'managed' therefore the costs of staffing/equipment to maintain the area.

PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE KITHILL WILDLIFE SITE ST40/015 TO A NATURE RESERVE

Government guidance:

Taken from: [Local nature reserves: setting up and management - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Local authorities can create local nature reserves (LNRs). Town and parish councils can create LNRs if the district council has given them the power to do so.

The local authority must control the LNR land - either through ownership, a lease or an agreement with the owner. As a manager of an LNR you need to care for and protect its natural features. You must also make your land accessible for any visitors.

It isn't a formal requirement that your LNR is open to the public but you should aim to make at least part of it publicly accessible.

How to declare a LNR:

To declare your site as a LNR, first you should contact Natural England by email: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk or telephone: 0300 060 3900.



You'll be asked to formally declare your LNR by sending a draft declaration document. It must be signed by the relevant local authority committees, have a map showing the boundary and a management plan detailing:

- ownership of the land
- any agreements or partnerships
- why the LNR site was chosen
- aims and objectives
- biodiversity management and environmental education
- community participation, access and visitor management
- costs and funding arrangements

Following the consultation you will be asked to send the final declaration document to Natural England, signed by the relevant local authority committees.

Announce your LNR:

You should put an advert announcing the LNR in a local and let the public inspect the declaration and boundary map free of charge.

Natural England will add your LNR to the [Designated Sites View website](#) which provides information about LNRs to the public.

Manage your LNR:

Local authorities can run LNRs independently or you can involve:

- 'friends of' community groups
- wildlife trusts and other recognised conservation bodies
- site-based rangers
- local school children
- Natural England (who can give advice)

Access to your LNR:

LNR's should be publicly accessible where visitors would not damage or disturb wildlife. You can restrict access to some areas if visitors could cause damage to the natural environment, unless the public have statutory access rights.

Byelaws:

Local authorities and town and parish councils can create LNR byelaws.

Byelaws can help you stop people damaging your LNR, for example prevent visitors walking into areas where they could harm wildlife. Before you create byelaws you should have tried other ways to keep your LNR safe and its wildlife protected. You can fine people if they break your byelaws.

Byelaws can only be enforced within the LNR. They must not replicate existing laws. You must have formally declared your LNR to Natural England or your byelaws will be invalid.

Control dogs on your LNR:

You can also put a [dog control order](#) in place to:

- ban or restrict the number of dogs
- make visitors clear up their dog mess
- keep dogs on leads

Information received from Natural England

Taken from '*Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration*'

Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 gives local authorities the power to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves.

The responsibility for selecting, acquiring, and making arrangements for management of these reserves lies with local authorities. Section 21(6) of the Act says that a local authority can only declare an LNR after consultation with Natural England.

It should be noted that comments about site selection and management are simply our advice. Natural England has no mandatory powers over selection or declaration, but local authorities must consult us in exercising their powers under Section 21.

Benefits for local authorities

Declaring an LNR offers many benefits for local authorities such as improving local quality of life, health and wellbeing. An LNR creates new spaces for education, enjoyment, and recreation, helps attract visitors and preserves links with the local community's past. It safeguards local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water. Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage is also a key part of building sustainable communities. Declaring an LNR draws attention to the land's nature conservation and recreation interest, and provides a positive use for land that might otherwise be perceived as available for development. These multiple benefits mean that LNRs can make a substantial contribution to meeting the aspirations of Local Strategic Partnerships.

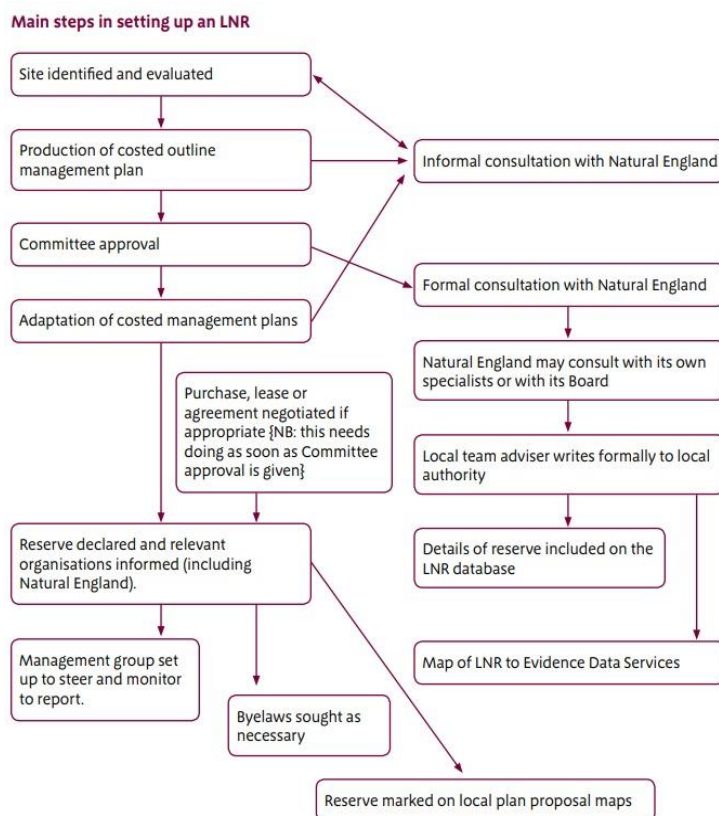
STEPS TO ESTABLISHING AN LNR:

This section describes some of the actions typically required to establish an LNR. These are summarised in the diagram below.

Securing local authority legal interest in the land Under the 1949 Act, the local authority must first have or acquire a legal interest in the land in question through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers involved.

The local authority making the declaration must also have jurisdiction over the area in which the proposed reserve lies. A local authority owning land in a second local authority's area can only declare the land an LNR if powers are delegated to it by the second local authority. For sites that extend across a local authority boundary, a joint declaration may be made by two local authorities.

Definition of a local authority Local authorities are defined in the Local Government Act, 1972, Section 270. It says 'local authority' means: 'a county council, the Greater London Council, a district council, a London borough council or a parish or community council.' While local government restructuring has led to changes in the principal councils' titles, the broad sweep of the definition is clear. Under Section 101 any principal local authority may delegate, by mutual agreement, its functions under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 to a parish, town or community council (or indeed to any other local authority).



Setting up a Management Advisory Committee:

The parties involved in identifying, evaluating, declaring and managing the LNR may form a group to help steer the process, which is often termed the Management Advisory Committee.

It could typically comprise representatives of the local authority, the local community, and potential users of the LNR, which may include environmental or other local interest groups. Ideally a management advisory committee should be established early on in the process of declaring an LNR.

Where schools are major users, it may be worthwhile setting up a junior management board, made up of young people elected by their schools to ensure their needs and ideas are fed into the management of the reserve.

CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

Under Section 21 of the 1949 Act, a local authority may only declare an LNR after consultation with Natural England. Ideally, Natural England local staff should be consulted informally at an early stage so that any problems can be ironed out before a formal consultation is made.

Natural England has a lot of experience in the management of nature reserves and local Natural England staff can advise on management methods and costs, as well as providing advice on the special natural interest of the site if needed and how it can be managed for access.

Consultation process:

1. Informal discussions about the possibility of an LNR designation between Natural England and local authority.
2. Natural England staff ensure that local authority knows and adheres to the proper procedures for declaration, in particular that a legal interest is held in the land prior to declaration.
3. Local authority decides to proceed.
4. The Natural England chief executive asks Natural England's local team advisers to consult directly with the local authority on its behalf.
5. A formal letter is sent by the local authority to Natural England's appropriate team adviser outlining the proposal and seeking Natural England's views.
6. Local Natural England team seeks any guidance it needs from specialist teams. Where proposals are particularly complex, controversial or innovative, the case may be referred to the Area Manager or Regional Director.
7. The local team adviser confirms to the local authority that the consultation is complete and makes necessary advice and comments. The team adviser's letter should begin: 'Natural England confirms that it has been consulted about your proposal to declare...[the name of the site]...a Nature Reserve under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The requirement for consultation contained in Section 21 (6) of that Act has therefore been met.'
8. Local team asks to be informed once the LNR has been declared and to receive a set of declaration papers and a map. This information is then placed in the Natural England database and website. More detailed information on the site to be sent to Natural England at a later date.

LNR Management Plan:

As good practice, Natural England would ideally like to comment on a basic management plan. Production of a plan is not a legislative requirement, but the site has to be managed as a nature reserve when it is declared as an LNR.

Natural England recommends that within one year of a declaration, a reasonably comprehensive management plan should be prepared.

The plan needs to be simple and relevant to the complexity and size of the site. To gain the support and interest of site-users and local people it helps to involve them in the management planning through consultation. A summary plan is sometimes used instead of a full management plan. This is a concise version of the full plan, which should include all the subject areas of the full plan and all costs associated with management of the site. Every LNR should have a summary plan, whether or not a more comprehensive management plan has been prepared.

Q. How long are management plans for?

A. LNR management plans normally cover five years but can be shorter, for example three years or annual, or even as long as 20 years. To be useful as working documents, they should be reviewed annually.

Management of LNRs:

Where educational use and public enjoyment are concerned, high quality management is essential to get the best from the site for habitats, species, and local communities. In addition to management of habitats and natural features, interpretive materials and well planned, clearly defined footpaths have important parts to play.

Site-based staff and trained volunteers can be particularly effective in maintaining and enhancing site values.

Many LNRs are used extensively by schools. LNR managers should seek the involvement of the education authority in helping to ensure that the potential of the LNR is realised, that its facilities are adequate, and that National Curriculum targets are understood and served, and that site staff have opportunities for relevant training. An annual mailing of basic literature about LNRs in the area should also go to all local schools.

LNR management should maintain the features that give the site its special interest. Where the purpose of the LNR is to give special opportunities for study or research, then the maintenance or improvement of these opportunities should be a main aim.

Thus, the definition of management objectives and the development of working programmes are important from the outset. In-house ecologists or organisations such as the Wildlife Trust can help as well as Natural England staff.

Q. Do LNRs have to be managed?

A. Yes, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the definition of an LNR is land managed as a nature reserve or for a conservation purpose, implying that LNRs are managed. When local authorities declare an LNR they take on the duty of care to manage and look after the site. This can be done

directly by the local authority or through a management agreement with another organisation such as a wildlife trust, Friends Of group, or community group.

FAQ

Q. Does an LNR have to be fully accessible to the public?

A. Well managed access maximises the benefits of bringing people closer to nature, however, there is no set requirement that LNRs should be fully accessible to the public. Most LNRs have open access but in some cases, sites have restricted access to sensitive areas. Some sites have access restrictions on part of the site for part of the year, for example bird breeding season or flowering season for rare/special plants. The best approach is to make an LNR as accessible as possible.

Q. What can LNRs offer for people with disabilities?

A. LNRs are an opportunity for everyone to experience and enjoy nature. All LNRs should provide safe and reasonable access for disabled people, in keeping with the site conditions. LNRs are not exempt from the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and information points or signage should indicate which parts are accessible.

Help with Management:

Natural England will consider applications for financial help for the effective management of LNRs, but funds are limited. There is no automatic entitlement to grants and the amount awarded will depend on the level of benefit for nature conservation and the money available to Natural England for grants. Details can be obtained from local offices. Grants may also be available from other organisations.

E. Wilkins, Deputy Town Clerk, June 2023.