

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

2022/23 Goosnargh Parish Council – referred to as The Council

Explanation of NO answers.

1. **NO** - Goosnargh Parish Clerk died at the end of March but as she worked from home and stored all the documents on a personal computer, the replacement Clerk was unable to access any records including the bank accounts and statements. Due to numerous complications, the situation was not rectified until the **7th August** – see attached email from Nat West. Consequently, the Council has not been able to prepare the AGAR by the 31st July in accordance with the Accounts and Audit regulations.
2. **NO** - Following the Clerk's death, the cheque books could not be found and the bank statements could not be accessed. Whilst this has now been rectified – with no discrepancies identified – there was clearly a risk to the safeguarding of public money.
3. **NO** - None of the Councillors were aware of the bank codes or passwords and they could not access the Council's email account – consequently invoices could not be paid and correspondence could not be accessed so the Council was unable to conduct its business or manage its finances.
4. **NO** – see 1 above. The accounts and 2022/23 AGAR were presented to the 25th September 2023 Council meeting – outside the statutory periods for the public inspection – however, in the interests of openness and transparency, a full copy of the business transactions, bank reconciliation and a copy of this explanation and details of how to inspect the 2022/23 accounts have been added to the Council's website.
5. **NO** - There is no evidence to suggest that a review of the financial risks was carried out and even if there was, the internal controls were not robust enough to prevent the above problems occurring.
6. **NO** – The 2022/23 internal audit has not been carried out as the relevant documents (stored on the previous Clerk's personal computer) are not available. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were also significantly out of date.
7. **NO** – MIN 549 confirms that PKF Littlejohn were paid for the 2021/22 audit – but there is insufficient detail to confirm that the completed AGAR and all matters requiring attention were presented and approved by Council.
8. **YES** – Following the year end and the appointment of a new Clerk, the Council has disclosed everything it should have regarding its business activity – including events taking place after the year end.
9. **N/A** – The Council does not manage any Trust funds

Newly appointed Clerk and RFO

Mrs Julie Buttle