

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

SUBJECT:	Annual Governance and Accountability Return ('AGAR')
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 a) That members confirm their response to the Declarations contained in Section 1 of the AGAR and adopt the necessary statements.
- b) That members adopt the accounting statements set out in Section 2 of the AGAR.

2. Background

- 2.1 Every year the Council is subject to an audit by government appointed auditors.
- 2.2 The deadline for submission of all relevant documentation to the auditors is the 1st July.
- 2.3 Previous years AGAR documentation is available on the Councils website.
www.newark.gov.uk/finance
- 2.4 Members who are interested can learn more about the audit process from visiting the website of the external auditor:
<https://www.pkf-l.com/services/limited-assurance-regime/submission-requirements/>
- 2.5 As a larger authority with an income exceeding £200,000 but less than £6.5 million, we are subject to an intermediate level review. This necessitates the submission of significantly more evidential documentation than the large majority of parish councils. Every year the topic for intermediate review changes with this year's focus being on the Councils approach to Internal Audit and review of Risk Management .
- 2.6 Attached to this report are the 2 pages of the AGAR report which require input from the members. In relation to Section 1 the Clerk would make the following observations in support of the members response to the respective statements. Please also note the comments in the '*Yes' means that this authority'* box as stated by the external auditor.

Statement 1: We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

- The Council correctly has an appointed s.151 Responsible Finance Officer.
- The Council uses industry relevant accountants to support the effective financial management.
- The Council operates a system of internal checks and balances.
- The accounting statements have been produced by the accountants.

Statement 2: We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

The Council has maintained and developed the internal control measures in the 24/25 financial year. Some of those measures were initiated by the Clerk and Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Other measures were recommended by the Internal Auditor.

Statement 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.

A Yes response to this question is largely determined by the level of confidence in the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and RFO's ability to advise the Council of laws, regulations and Proper Practices. A combination of a qualified Clerk and RFO supported by external advisers where necessary should give members the confidence to give a 'Yes' response to this question.

Statement 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.

The Clerk confirms all relevant notices advertising the electors' rights were correctly displayed. Evidence of this is also annually tested by the external auditors. Notices are displayed on the Council website as well as in the noticeboard.

Statement 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.

The Council reviewed its risk register during the period to which this AGAR related and is scheduled for review in the current year at the next FGP meeting. All Council reports also prompt a consideration of risk factors. Insurance is provided by Zurich Municipal and their new contract was agreed by members in March.

Statement 6: We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

Internal Audit is undertaken by Assurance Lincolnshire at Lincolnshire County Council for the 22/23 financial year and 23/24 financial year and 24/25 financial year. The internal audit for the 24/25 financial year is scheduled later this month ahead of the AGAR deadline.

Statement 7: We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

Yes all matters have been addressed and will be tested at the next internal audit.

Statement 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.

The accountants have duly included all relevant matters arising under this statement within the year end accounts which are part of this Agenda.

Statement 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.

The Doris Bainbridge accounts are due to be presented to Full Council in July and will be audited by the internal auditor ahead of that meeting.

3.0 Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues

3.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL
ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

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 2025, 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
	✓		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

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

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

18/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

WWW.NEWARK.GOV.UK
ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	468,553	363,259	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	1,093,359	1,227,058	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	952,668	2,156,828	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	875,285	907,852	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	66,282	66,281	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,209,754	1,190,878	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	363,259	1,582,134	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	319,368	1,476,505	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	20,146,901	19,331,336	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	1,173,626	1,139,587	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

SUBJECT:	Cemetery Working Group Appointment and Remit Review
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>a) That members determine the composition of and appointment to the Cemetery Development Working Group for the 25/26 civic year and appoint the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Working Group.</p> <p>b) That members review the remit of the Working Group albeit no changes are recommended.</p>
2.	Background
2.1	The Cemetery Development Working Group sits under the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
2.2	As this is the first FGP meeting of the new civic year an annual review of the composition of the working group and appointment of its members is required.
2.3	<p>The current members are:</p> <p>Cllr. Lisa Geary (Chairman) ,Cllr. Barbara Corrigan (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Diane Ledger, Cllr. Matthew Skinner and Cllr. Tom Collier.</p>
	<p>CURRENT REMIT OF THE WORKING GROUP</p> <p>The group shall consist of 5 Town Council members.</p> <p>Meetings of the group shall be quorate with at least 3 members present.</p> <p>The existence and remit of the group and the membership thereof shall be reviewed annually at the first FGP meeting of each Civic year and as necessary the Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be appointed at the same meeting.</p> <p>The group shall meet as often as it deems necessary for the effective discharge of the business of the sub committee.</p> <p>The group is tasked with the following:</p> <p>EXISTING CEMETERY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of proposals for delivery of a Children's Burial area in the existing Cemetery. 2. Development of costed proposals for conversion of the Cemetery Lodge for use for residential purposes.

	<p>NEW CEMETERY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake public consultation to understand wider public views as to the need for a new Cemetery site when the existing site runs out of burial space. 2. Undertake public consultation to understand wider public views as to the possibility of reusing old graves (where legislation allows). 3. Assess the availability of potential new Cemetery sites and develop an understanding of the planning, logistical and financial implications of delivering a new site. 4. Assess potential delivery partners for a new Cemetery. <p>At the earliest possible opportunity, the group will present to FGP the outcome of consultation and its recommendations as to the need for further efforts to deliver future burial provision. Subsequent to this, the group will present costed proposals to FGP committee relating to elements detailed above and ahead of formal proposals being made to update the FGP committee on progress at least quarterly albeit more frequent updates may at times be necessary.</p> <p>In all areas of the groups work and remit, the group will seek to ensure appropriate governance and financial management is applied for any financial commitment towards the undertaking of the Group and will seek to ensure that in all areas of undertakings the Council is obtaining best value for public funds and resources.</p>
3.	Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues
	All relevant matters contained in the report above.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

SUBJECT:	Target Hardening on Town Council Land
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1.	Recommendations
1.1	That members determine if they wish to invest in further target hardening across Council owned land as detailed in this report.
2.	Background
2.1	In recent months there have been encroachments and encampments on public land including Sconce and Devon Park and Collis Close.
2.2	As members will be aware there is a legal process to follow to secure eviction of the occupiers that can take several days and involve considerable cost and officer resource. Often the land involved requires extensive clean up once the occupiers have left.
2.3	Many areas of land owned or managed by the Town Council already have target hardening measures incorporated. The most popular option is bunding whereby natural earth mounds are created along borders to serve as a barrier to prevent encroachment.
2.4	The Councils Asset Maintenance Manager has identified further sites that may benefit from additional protection including Collis Close itself, land adjacent to Barnby Road play area and land that links Beacon Hill with Clay Lane.
2.5	Costs for creation of the bunds at all 3 sites is £6300.00 or £2100 per site. This is not a cost that has been budgeted for in the current financial year and so would require use of general reserves to meet this cost.
2.6	Collis Close and Barnby Road are considered higher risk sites as encroachment has already occurred or the land is of a size that would support an encampment.
2.7	Barnby Road already has a low target hardening wooden rail around the perimeter however these can be easily removed to create an access point.
3.	Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues
	<p>Financial – Although there is a capital cost, the cost savings from avoiding future enforcement action is significant and would outweigh the initial investment.</p> <p>Collis Close is owned by the County Council but leased to the Town Council with an agreement between NCC, NSDC and NTC to contribute towards maintenance costs. Contributions although not guaranteed will be sought from NCC and NSDC as well as consent for the works being required from NCC.</p>

	<p>Environmental – Bunds are natural features sown with wildflowers and therefore create welcome habitat for insects and invertebrates and generally positively add to the flora and fauna of the site.</p> <p>Risk Issues – The proposed works are designed to eliminate a level of risk that if realised creates a significant financial and logistical burden on the Council.</p>
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Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

SUBJECT:	Notice of Motion
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1.	Recommendations
1.1	That members determine their response to the x2 Motions received as detailed below.
2.	Background
2.1	<p>Motion Number 1 – Proposed by Cllr. Mathew Skinner and Seconded by Cllr. Jack Kellass</p> <p>Motion to Finance and General Purposes Committee – Newark Town Council</p> <p>For meeting scheduled Wednesday 18th June 2025</p> <p>10th June 2025</p> <p>This council warmly invites the Mayor for the East Midlands – Claire Ward to provide a presentation and answer questions from members at her earliest convenience. The Regional Mayor was elected over 12 months ago (May 2024) for a four-year term. I believe it would be helpful to hear directly from her, what she has achieved for Newark to date and what she hopes to achieve for the town during the remainder of her term of office.</p>
2.2	<p>Motion Number 2 - Proposed by Cllr. Jack Kellass and seconded by Cllr. Mathew Skinner</p> <p>Motion to Finance and General Purposes Committee – Newark Town Council</p> <p>For meeting scheduled Wednesday 18th June 2025</p> <p>10th June 2025</p> <p>At future meetings of the finance and general purposes committee, a schedule of actions from previous/outstanding decisions (e,g motions) and visibility of forthcoming items for decision is added to the agenda. It would help members to remain informed of key items for decision outstanding/forthcoming and better informed in advance to consider these matters carefully.</p> <p>You could summarise, we are asking for a 'Forward Plan' and 'Outstanding/Forthcoming items for decision'.</p>
3.	Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues
	All relevant matters contained in the report above.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

SUBJECT:	Cemetery Fees and Charges
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1.	Recommendations															
1.1	That the increases in Cemetery Fees and Charges detailed in this report be approved and to apply as from the 1 st August 2025.															
2.	Background															
2.1	Members reviewed fees and charges in March 2025 but a decision was deferred with a request for further information.															
2.2	The budget for the 25/26 financial year was adopted based on an anticipation of an increase in Cemetery Fees and Charges.															
2.3	The Cemetery is a revenue generating service. It presents an opportunity to generate income that helps to reduce dependency on Council Tax revenue.															
2.4	The Cemetery is a high maintenance service area that only operates with the benefit of public funding. Even with service charge increases recommended herein, the Cemetery will continue to be a service that requires a level of funding support from Council Tax receipts.															
2.5	The income and expenditure for the Cemetery in the last 2 financial years is shown below: <table><tr><td>Year</td><td>Income</td><td>Expenditure</td><td>Net Loss</td></tr><tr><td>23/24</td><td>£135,392.00</td><td>£233,517.00</td><td>£98,125</td></tr><tr><td>24/25</td><td>£132,993.00</td><td>£219,429.00</td><td>£86,436</td></tr></table>				Year	Income	Expenditure	Net Loss	23/24	£135,392.00	£233,517.00	£98,125	24/25	£132,993.00	£219,429.00	£86,436
Year	Income	Expenditure	Net Loss													
23/24	£135,392.00	£233,517.00	£98,125													
24/25	£132,993.00	£219,429.00	£86,436													
2.6	Full Council have recently considered costs for consultancy in pursuing a new Cemetery site in response to the recent consultation exercise. Although not agreed or confirmed yet these costs will not be insignificant.															
2.6	Some respondents in the consultation indicated that they feel that the users of the service should be the ones to pay for it.															
2.7	The attached Appendix sets out current fees, proposed fees and benchmarking against other Cemeteries although as all Cemeteries are different in terms of maintenance costs benchmarking is not something to give too much attention to. Newark is a costly site to manage due to the volume of trees, conservation area status and existence of a listed building on site.															

2.8	A recent survey of the listed chapel has identified potential repair costs exceeding £100,000.
2.9	The service charges increase proposals are now aimed at generating revenue to help with future Cemetery development and so benchmarking is also less of a factor albeit the increases recommended are such that charges will remain comparable with some other Cemeteries.
2.10	Some services due to their infrequency are proposed to remain as they are in terms of cost.
	Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues
3.1	All relevant factors detailed above or in attached Appendix.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2025/2026
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That Members confirm the appointment of Town Council representatives on Outside Bodies for the 2025/26 Civic Year *(those coloured red on the attached Appendix)*.

2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with established practice, Members are requested to consider the appointment of representatives to the Outside Bodies shown at Appendix 1 and confirm new appointments for relevant bodies.

- 2.2 The Outside Bodies listed at Appendix 1 are a mix of registered Charities and other community bodies. The role of Members when sitting on these bodies are summarised below:

- (i) **Charities** – these organisations are seeking Town Councillors to serve as they are seen as being ‘upstanding’ members and representatives of the local community. Their role on the Charity is not to represent the Town Council, indeed by law they should always act in the best interest of the Charity concerned, irrespective of any implications that decision could have for the Town Council. The following organisations fall into this category:

Hospital of St Leonard of Newark

Lilley & Stone School Charities

Magnus Educational Foundation

Newark Mind

Newark Municipal Charities

Newark & Sherwood CVS

W E Knight Education Trust

- (ii) **Other Bodies** – the remainder of outside bodies are more focussed on actual service delivery/projects often influencing other service providers in and around Newark. On these bodies the role of the Town Councillor is as a representative of the Town Council.

3. Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental and Risk Issues

3.1 None.

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1
REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES
(AS RESOLVED AT FGP 19th JUNE 2024 WITH MID YEAR CHANGES)

OUTSIDE BODY	PREVIOUS/CURRENT TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION	TERM OF OFFICE
East Midlands Museum Service	Town Clerk	Civic Year
Hospital of St Leonard of Newark	Town Mayor – ex officio Cllr B Corrigan Cllr N Ross	4-year term to 2027 4-year term to 2027
Lilley & Stone School Charities	Town Mayor – ex officio Cllr D Moore Vacancy	4 year term to 2027 4 year term to 2027
Magnus Educational Foundation	Town Mayor – ex officio Cllr D Moore Cllr E Cropper	4 year term to 2027 4-year term to 2027
Newark Allotments & Gardens Assn	Cllr D Campbell	Civic Year
Newark in Bloom	Cllr L Goff	Civic Year
Newark Civic Trust Awards	Town Mayor	Civic Year
Newark Healthcare Consultative Group	Cllr I Brown <i>Previously 2 representatives but group have now moved to 1.</i>	Civic Year
Newark Heritage Forum	Cllr D Moore	Civic Year
Newark Mind / Mental Health Organisations	Cllr D Moore	Civic Year
Newark Municipal Charities	Cllr G Rix Cllr S Crosby	4 year term 4 year term
Friends of Newark Cemetery	Cllr S Crosby	Civic Year

Newark & Sherwood CVS	Cllr D Moore	Civic Year
Safer Neighbourhoods Groups	All Councillors	
W E Knight Education Trust	Cllr L Geary Cllr B Corrigan Cllr T Collier	3 year term expired March 2025 3 year term to 2026 3 year term to 2026

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the Committee's remaining business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and the public interest in disclosing the information.

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684 801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk