Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Sutton on Trent Parish Council – NT0176**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review as the responses given in Section 1, Box 9 and Section 2, Box 11 are not consistent. The smaller authority has confirmed it is not a sole managing trustee and should have answered 'Yes' to Section 2 Box 11.

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

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 10, and it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. This is consistent with the internal auditor's response to internal control objective O.

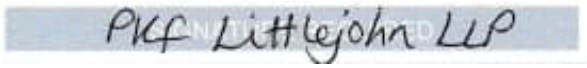
The minute references on both Section 1 and Section 2 are not clear and completely legible. The minutes of the meeting at which the AGAR was approved have been reviewed and demonstrate that Sections 1 and 2 have been approved in the correct order under minute references 26/039 (b) and (c). The smaller authority should ensure that all of the information on the AGAR is fully legible in future.

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature 

Date 23/09/2026