

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 Part 2

To be completed only by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other smaller authorities* where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, that meet the qualifying criteria, and that wish to CERTIFY themselves as EXEMPT from a limited assurance review

Guidance notes on completing Part 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income **or** gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, following the end of each financial year, complete Part 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices*, unless the authority:
 - a) does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
 - b) does not wish to certify itself as exempt
2. Smaller authorities where the higher of all gross annual income **or** gross annual expenditure **does not exceed** £25,000 and that meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption **are able to declare themselves exempt** from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review **provided** the authority **completes**:
 - a) The **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3 and returns a copy of it to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2021**. Failure to do so will result in reminder letter(s) for which the Authority will be charged £40 +VAT for each letter; and
 - b) The **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 2)** which is made up of:
 - **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6)** must be completed and approved by the authority.

NOTE: Authorities certifying themselves as exempt SHOULD NOT send the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement before approving Section 2 Accounting Statements and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2021**.

Publication Requirements

Smaller authorities **must** publish various documents on a publicly available website as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. These include:

- **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3
- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21**, page 4
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**, page 5
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21**, page 6
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Limited Assurance Review

Any smaller authority may request a limited assurance review. If so, the authority should not certify itself as exempt or complete the Certificate of Exemption. Instead it should complete Part 3 of the AGAR 2020/21 and return it to the external auditor together with the supporting documentation requested by the external auditor. The cost to the authority for the review will be **£200 +VAT**.

Provided that the authority certifies itself as exempt, and completes and publishes the documents listed under 'Publication Requirements', there is no requirement for the authority to have a review.

If it decides to certify itself as exempt, the authority must complete and return the Certificate of Exemption on Page 3 to the external auditor to confirm that it has certified itself exempt.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Part 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21, Sections 1 and 2

- An authority that wishes to declare itself exempt from the requirement for a limited assurance review must do so at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2021. It should not submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor. However, as part of a more proportionate regime, the authority **must** comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The Certificate of Exemption must be returned to the external auditor no later than **30 June 2021**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT for each letter.
- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. Proper Practices are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed annual return. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness at the meeting at which it is signed off.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- The authority must publish numerical and narrative explanations for significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 6**. Guidance is provided in the *Practitioners' Guide** which may assist.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2020) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2021).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish, on the authority website/webpage, the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2021**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?	✓	
	Have the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights been published?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', is an explanation available for publication?	✓	
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	✓	
	Is an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 available, should a question be raised by a local elector and/or an interested party?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? (<i>Local Councils only</i>)		✓

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2020/21 Part 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2021, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2021 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2021** notifying the external auditor.

Milborne St Andrew Parish Council

certifies that during the financial year 2020/21, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year or total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Total annual gross income for the authority 2020/21: **£13,349** R AMOUNT £00,000

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2020/21: **£14,840** R AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt**, so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority is **unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Part 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£200 +VAT** will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2017
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2019/20), the external auditor **has not**:
 - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
 - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
 - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
 - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
 - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If you are able to confirm that the above statements apply and that the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage* before 1 July 2021.

By signing this certificate you are also confirming that you are aware of this requirement.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer Date

04/05/2021

I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:

04/05/2021

Signed by Chairman

Date

04/05/2021

as recorded in minute reference:

AGM 04th May 2021 5.6 REFERENCE

Generic email address of Authority

milbornestandrew@dorset-aptc.gov.uk ERIC EMAIL ADDRESS

Telephone number

07419 136735 NUMBER

*Published web address

http://www.milbornestandrew.org.uk/ AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2021. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

MILBORNE ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

<http://www.milbornestandrew-pc.org.uk/community/milborne-st-andrew-parish-council-7786/home>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, 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 2020/21 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 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")	✓		
L. The authority publishes information on a website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities. *		✓	
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes). *		✓	
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

01/06/2021 DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

21/06/2021

*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).

Test C: Risk management

The Council is required to carry out a risk assessment annually (Accounts and Audit Regulations) 2015. The regulations require that the council meeting as a whole has to review their system of internal control including risk management.

The Annual General Meeting of the Council did not take place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, so the risk assessment was not carried out during the financial year. There is a danger that a failure to adequately review and assess the risks facing the Council will result in additional costs and a failure to achieve the Council's corporate objectives. I have, therefore, assessed the test as a 'fail'.

Test J: Accounting statements

The test is marked as having substantially achieved the related control objectives, but note that there were a number of errors contained in the 19/20 accounting statement approved by Members on 15/07/20. The Council agreed to restate the 19/20 comparatives in the 20/21 AGAR, but this was not done. The 20/21 AGAR contains 2 related errors: staff costs include mileage and home office allowance expenditure of £138 which should be included in other payments according to the Practitioner's Guide. As the 19/20 error on fixed assets was not restated, that figure does not comply with the Practitioner's Guide.

Test L: Transparency

As a smaller authority, the Council is required to publish certain documents noted in the Transparency Code 2015. Whilst the Council's website does have a 'transparency code' link, this only goes to the Code itself. As the publications required do not appear to be published, I have assessed the test as a 'fail'.

Test N: Publication

In order to test compliance with the Council's requirement for the exercise of public rights, I checked to see that the authority complied with the publication requirements for the AGAR 2019/20. As a smaller Council, this meant the following needed to be published before 01/09/20:

- Certificate of Exemption, page 3 AGAR
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2018/19, page 4 AGAR
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19, page 5 AGAR
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2018/19, page 6 AGAR
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The public rights period ran from 01/09/20 to 13/10/20, which means that the AGAR publications should have been published on or before 31/08/20 (so that they were in place at midnight on 01/09/20). The Clerk noted on 10/09/20 that the 19/20 AGAR had not yet been put on the website as it was pending the conclusion of the internal audit.

The certificate of exemption and note of period of public rights 19/20 were on the website at the date of the internal audit testing on 01/06/21. The other information was not. The Clerk noted that the other documents were put up and taken down.

External audit confirmed in April 2021 that, in the absence of a website audit trail, screenshots are now considered acceptable evidence of publication dates.

As the required publications were not on the website at the start of the public rights period, I have assessed the test as a 'fail'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Darkin-Miller', written in a cursive style.

R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 21/06/21

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

Milborne St Andrew Parish 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 2021, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No	'Yes' means that this authority:
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.

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

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

04/05/2021

and recorded as minute reference:

AGM 04th May 2021 5.6 REFERENCE

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

Chairman

Clerk

Other information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)

The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.	Yes	No
		✓

<http://www.milbornestandrew.org.uk/> AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

Milborne St Andrew Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	17,625	18,697	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	11,823	11,800	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	869	1,548	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	2,884	2,960	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	1,440	1,440	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	7,296	10,440	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	18,697	17,205	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	18,697	17,205	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	76,218	76,664	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	1,989	691	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		✓	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 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

Date

04/05/2021

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

04/05/2021

as recorded in minute reference:

AGM 04th May 2021 5.6

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

WHAT EXEMPT AUTHORITIES NEED TO DO TO ADVERTISE THE PERIOD DURING WHICH ELECTORS AND INTERESTED PERSONS MAY EXERCISE RIGHTS RELATING TO THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) require that:

1. The statement of accounts prepared by the authority (i.e. the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 2), the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the smaller authority and including the first 10 working days of July.
2. The period referred to in paragraph (1) starts with the day on which the period for the exercise of public rights is treated as having been commenced i.e. the day following the day on which all of the obligations in paragraph (3) below have been fulfilled.
3. The responsible financial officer for an exempt authority must, on behalf of that authority, publish **(which must include publication on the authority's website)**:

- (a) the Accounting Statements (i.e. Section 2 of the AGAR Part 2), accompanied by:
 - (i) a declaration, signed by that officer to the effect that the statement of accounts will not be audited on account of that authority's self-certified status as exempt, unless either a request for an opportunity to question the auditor about the authority's accounting records under section 26(2) or an objection under section 27(1) of the Act, results in the involvement of the local auditor;
 - (ii) the Annual Governance Statement (i.e. Section 1 of the AGAR Part 2); and
 - (iii) the Certificate of Exemption (i.e. Page 3 of the AGAR Part 2); and
- (b) a statement that sets out—
 - (i) the period for the exercise of public rights;
 - (ii) details of the manner in which notice should be given of an intention to inspect the accounting records and other documents;
 - (iii) the name and address of the local auditor;
 - (iv) the provisions contained in section 25 (inspection of statements of accounts etc), section 26 (inspection of documents etc) and section 27 (right to make objections at audit) of the Act, as they have effect in relation to the authority in question;

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

You will meet statutory requirements if you fully and accurately complete the notice of public rights pro forma in this document; and publish **(including publication on the smaller authority's website)** the following documents, the day before the public rights period commences:

- a. the approved Sections 1 and 2 of Part 2 of the AGAR; and
- b. the completed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance & Accountability Return (Exempt Authority). Please note that we have pre-completed it with the following **suggested** dates: Monday 14 June – Friday 23 July 2021. (The latest possible dates that comply with the statutory requirements are Thursday 1 July – Wednesday 11 August 2021); and
- c. the notes which accompany the Notice (Local authority accounts: a summary of your rights).

Smaller authority name: **Milborne St Andrew Parish Council**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION
OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY
RETURN (EXEMPT AUTHORITY)**

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

**Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 25, 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)**

NOTICE

1. Date of announcement 20th June 2021 (a)

2. Each year the smaller authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The AGAR has been published with this notice. It will not be reviewed by the appointed auditor, since the smaller authority has certified itself as exempt from the appointed auditor's review. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the AGAR, the accounting records for the financial year to which it relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2021, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

(b) 13 Stileham Bank, Milborne St Andrew. DT11 0LE
milbornestandrew@dorset-aptc.gov.uk
07419 136 735

commencing on (c) **Thursday 01st July 2021**

and ending on (d) **Wednesday 11th August 2021**

3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is only subject to review by the appointed auditor if questions or objections raised under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 lead to the involvement of the auditor. The appointed auditor is:

PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)
15 Westferry Circus
Canary Wharf
London E14 4HD
(sba@pkf-l.com)

5. This announcement is made by (e) Mr Wayne Lewin

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2021 for 2020/21 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#).

A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication [Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights](#) are available from the NAO website.

If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the *Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return*.

MILBORNE ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

RECONCILIATION FOR THE YEAR 2020-2021

A		E		CURRENT BALANCE	
OPENING BALANCE		UNPRESENTED CHEQUES		OPENING BALANCE	18696.88
Carried forward	18696.88		AMOUNT	PLUS INCOME	13348.57
31-Mar-20					
TOTAL	18696.88			LESS EXPENDITURE	14840.59
B				TOTAL	17204.86
BANK DETAILS					
BANK ACCOUNT	BALANCE				
Lloyds Current	17204.86			CUMULATIVE BALANCE	
				TOTAL BANK BALANCES	17204.86
				LESS U/P CHEQUES	0.00
TOTAL	17204.86			TOTAL	17204.86
C					0.00
INCOME					
INCOME	AMOUNT			INCOME	13348.57
See Receipts Ledger				EXPENDITURE	14840.59
TOTAL	13348.57			TOTAL	-1492.02
EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT				
See Payments Ledger					
TOTAL	14840.59				
		TOTAL	0.00		

RECONCILIATION

FINAL

Internal audit report 2020/21

Visit 1 of 1

MILBORNE ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 5th July 2021

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

Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Milborne St Andrew Parish Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on the 1st June 2021.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 2014 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as supplemented by additional tests required by the AIAR section of the 2018/19 and 2020/21 AGAR.

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 2020/21 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 reviewed during the testing appear to be operating effectively with the exception of:

Test C: Risk management

The Council is required to carry out a risk assessment annually (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015). The regulations require that the council meeting as a whole has to review their system of internal control including risk management.

The Annual General Meeting of the Council did not take place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, so the risk assessment was not carried out during the financial year. There is a danger that a failure to adequately review and assess the risks facing the Council will result in additional costs and a failure to achieve the Council's corporate objectives. I have, therefore, assessed the test as a 'fail'.

Test J: Accounting statements

The test is marked as having substantially achieved the related control objectives, but note that there were a number of errors contained in the 19/20 accounting statement approved by Members on 15/07/20. The Council agreed to restate the 19/20 comparatives in the 20/21 AGAR, but this was not done. The 20/21 AGAR contains 2 related errors: staff costs include mileage and home office allowance expenditure of £138 which should be included in other payments according to the Practitioner's Guide. As the 19/20 error on fixed assets was not restated, that figure does not comply with the Practitioner's Guide.

Test L: Transparency

As a smaller authority, the Council is required to publish certain documents noted in the Transparency Code 2015. Whilst the Council's website does have a 'transparency code' link,

this only goes to the Code itself. As the publications required do not appear to be published, I have assessed the test as a 'fail'.

Test N: Publication

In order to test compliance with the Council's requirement for the exercise of public rights, I checked to see that the authority complied with the publication requirements for the AGAR 2019/20. As a smaller Council, this meant the following needed to be published before 01/09/20:

- Certificate of Exemption, page 3 AGAR
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2018/19, page 4 AGAR
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19, page 5 AGAR
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2018/19, page 6 AGAR
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The public rights period ran from 01/09/20 to 13/10/20, which means that the AGAR publications should have been published on or before 31/08/20 (so that they were in place at midnight on 01/09/20). The Clerk noted on 10/09/20 that the 19/20 AGAR had not yet been put on the website as it was pending the conclusion of the internal audit.

The certificate of exemption and note of period of public rights 19/20 were on the website at the date of the internal audit testing on 01/06/21. The other information was not. The Clerk noted that the other documents were put up and taken down.

External audit confirmed in April 2021 that, in the absence of a website audit trail, screenshots are now considered acceptable evidence of publication dates.

As the required publications were not on the website at the start of the public rights period, I have assessed the test as a 'fail'.

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown on 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	8
Medium	4
Low	3
Information	1
TOTAL	16

I would like to thank Wayne Lewin, Parish Clerk, for his assistance during this audit.

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2020/21 INTERNAL AUDIT OF MILBORNE ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL
FINAL REPORT: 5th JULY 2021

Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
2.1 – Comply with Practitioner's Guide re approval of payments	<p>I checked a sample of payments in the cashbook to confirm that they were supported by invoices, authorised and minuted. I found that one of the two PWLB payments, and the final PAYE/NI payment made to HMRC were not minuted for approval. The Clerk noted that PWLB and HMRC payments had already been approved via DD, with entries for information on the payments list.</p> <p>The Practitioner's Guide at para 5.38 requires that 'all payments made since the last meeting should be reported to the next authority meeting'.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council complies with the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide, and that all payments are reported.</p>	M	<p>Councillors are provided with a payments list of all transactions both income and expenditure monthly.</p> <p>A quarterly report is also produced.</p>	WL	
2.2 – Council to confirm it is content with potential under-recovery of VAT	<p>I checked to see that VAT on payments had been identified, recorded and reclaimed. I noted that £290.10 of historic VAT appeared to be unclaimed in relation to prior years. The Clerk confirmed that he had carried out a review, was confident that all VAT had been claimed, and could not prove or disprove that the amount identified during the audits had not been claimed.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council confirms that it is content</p>	L	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Council have already accepted this.</p>	WL	

	that no further work be undertaken with regards to this potential under-recovery.				
3.1 – Put in place arrangements for Clerk cover	<p>I checked to see what arrangements were in place to provide continuity in the Clerk's absence. The Clerk confirmed that no arrangements were in place, but that meetings would be moved to accommodate the Clerk.</p> <p>Although the Council's affairs are relatively straight forward, it is worth ensuring that cover arrangements are organised in order to ensure that essential business can continue should the Clerk not be available. Other Councils have made cross-cover arrangements with local Councils, had a nominated Councillor shadow the Clerk to ensure that they could cover key tasks, or have agreed that they would use a locum. This recommendation was first raised in 2019/20.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council puts in place arrangements to ensure business continuity.</p>	H	This will be put to Council.	WL	
3.2 – Risk assessment	<p>The Council is required to carry out a risk assessment annually (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The regulations require that the council meeting as a whole has to review their system of internal control including risk management.</p> <p>The Annual General Meeting of the Council did not take place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, so the risk assessment was not carried out during the financial year. There is a danger that a failure to adequately review and assess the risks facing the Council will result in additional</p>	H	This will be placed on the next agenda	WL	

	<p>costs and a failure to achieve the Council's corporate objectives.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council reviews the risk assessment at its next meeting.</p>				
3.3 – Ensure website minutes contain the correct minute reference numbers	<p>I reviewed the Council minutes to confirm that there was no unusual financial activity. I noted no such activity, but did note that the minute references for the January 2021 and February 2021 minutes shown on the Council's website do not follow the sequential numbering of the other minutes. e.g. the December 2020 minutes end on minute number 243, but January 2021 minutes restart at 1, as do February 2021 minutes. March 2021 minutes run from minutes 279.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the final minute number for February 2021 was minute number 278.</p> <p>I recommend that the minutes on the Council's website are amended to reflect the minute numbering on the Council's hard copy minutes.</p>	L	Action completed	WL	
3.4 – Ensure Magazine information is correct	<p>I checked to see that published management reports are correct. I found that the Council does not public management reports, but that a section on Council activity is include in the Milborne St Andrew 'Reporter'. I found that the April 2020 magazine noted financial results for the year, but I was unable to agree these back to the figures presented during audit.</p> <p>Whilst the publication is not produced by the Council, I</p>	L	I have no control over what a magazine report. I am not involved in the proofread and only see when it is distributed to villagers.	WL	

	recommend that the Council seeks to ensure that any financial or other information reported by the Magazine in relation to the Council's activities is correct.				
4.1 – Accurate labelling of income and use of reserves	<p>I checked to see that the Council had prepared an annual budget in support of its precept. I found that precept was supported by the budget, but noted that the budget contained inaccurate headings in relation to income and use of General Reserves. £400 of income from the Environment Agency, and Allotments, was noted as relating to PWLB. A reserves transfer of £160 (to balance the budget whilst allowing £nil increase on the Band D following a decrease in the tax base) was noted as a grant. The latter label implies that income from a third party would be covering the shortfall, which could be misleading when e.g. carrying out budget monitoring during the year to confirm that all income due was being received.</p> <p>I recommend that future budgets accurately identify the source of external income, or the use of reserves to balance the budget, in order to ensure that an accurate budget is set, and to facilitate budget monitoring.</p>	M	The Parish Council spent much time on its budgets. The offset of £160 from general reserves was fully approved by Council in order to ensure the Precept was kept at or below the previous level.	WL	
4.2 – Council approval for use of reserves to fund expenditure	I checked to see that there were no significant unexplained variances from budget. I found that the Council was under on budgeted expenditure for the year, but that this included the use of reserves to pay for specific items of expenditure. The Clerk has confirmed that the use of reserves was discussed as part of the payment approvals process, but there is no minute specifically approving that expenditure should be funded	M	All business from the reserves is discussed and minuted. There are specific funds held in reserves for example (CAA). It is solely the business	WL	

	<p>from general reserves.</p> <p>The coding of expenditure to general reserves, without specific Council approval, can serve to hide in-year overspends, and to make it more difficult to identify and take corrective action.</p> <p>I recommend that expenditure is only coded to general reserves when Council has given specific approval for certain expenditure to be funded from reserves.</p>		of the Council how they spend their reserves.		
3.4 – Clarify the date when staff pay changes take effect	<p>I checked to see that salaries agreed with those approved by Council. I found that the Clerk's contract allows for the award of an annual increment subject to performance, and that the Clerk's pay had increased by one increment year on year, but I was unable to see where the increment for 20/21 had been agreed.</p> <p>I asked the Clerk to confirm when the increment for 20/21 was approved by Council, and was advised that this was approved in minute 276 17/02/21. However, this relates to a later pay award (presumably from 01/04/21, however the date that the pay award takes effect was not noted in minute 276).</p> <p>I recommend that, where progression is subject to performance, the Council formally minutes the change in scale point, and that the date on which the change takes effect is minuted.</p>	M	For the FY 20/21 of this audit period the increment was minuted.	WL	
7.2 – Ensure correct	I checked to see that all payments and deductions were corrected coded, and that suspense accounts were	H	Noted. I will also inform all other	WL	

accounting treatment of staff costs and other payments as per the Practitioner's Guide	<p>promptly cleared. I found that the Council does not use suspense accounts, and that the Clerk's home office allowance had been coded in error to salaries.</p> <p>The Clerk noted that 'I have always costed staff costs of mileage and home working allowance against staff costs for 8 years. If this has changed please let me know.'</p> <p>The Practitioner's Guide has required since 19/20 that staff salaries consist only of gross salary, employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions. I notified this to the Council during the 19/20 audit (recommendation 10.1 referred), advising that the 19/20 figures would need to be restated accordingly. The management response confirmed that this would be done. The 19/20 figures have not been restated, and the error on coding has been replicated in the 20/21 AGAR.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council ensures that the coding of staff and other payments fully complies with the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide in future. Note that on the 21/22 AGAR, staff costs and other payments will need to be re-stated to exclude the home office allowance from staff costs (and include it in other payments).</p>		auditors of this fact.		
8.1 – Comply with the Practitioner's Guide in relation to the 19/20 register values	The Practitioner's Guide states that normal accounting concepts of depreciation and revaluation do not apply to Parish Council assets. The expectation is that, once recorded on the register, asset values are likely to remain unchanged until the asset is disposed of. Where an asset	H	As discussed previously. Assets had historically been brought on incorrectly and had	WL	

	<p>value has previously been incorrectly stated, any correction made in the current year should also be restated in the previous year's register in the comparative column of the current year AGAR.</p> <p>The Clerk restated a number of asset values during the year in 19/20, in a manner which was not compliant with the Practitioner's Guide. Work carried out during that audit indicated the correct year-end value as at 31/03/20 was £72409, not £76218. The management response noted that the figures would be restated in the 20/21 AGAR, but they have not been.</p> <p>In 20/21 the only change was the replacement of the Homefield bench, which now has a value of £447 rather than £1. Based on the restated 19/20 fixed assets figure, this would give a fixed assets value of £72,855.</p> <p>I recommend that the Fixed Asset Register values are restated in accordance with the Practitioner's Guide.</p>		<p>already been actioned. Many assets not brought by the Council had been brought onto the asset register at a full cost and not a donation value.</p>		
10.1 – Unadjusted errors in 19/20 comparatives	<p>The following errors were not adjusted in the annual return approved by Council in July 2020:</p> <p>1. Other payments includes a refund of Neighbourhood Plan Grant of £478. As this is a refund of a grant received by the Council, it should have been shown as negative income. The Clerk has calculated that other receipts should have been £391 for 19/20 (figure agreed by Internal Audit) - this will need to be restated in the 20/21 AGAR comparative figures.</p> <p>2. Staff costs includes £120 of costs relating to a home</p>	Info	<p>Noted. The AGAR had been signed off by all parties.</p>		

	<p>office allowance. The Practitioner's Guide requires that this be shown as other payments. The 18/19 comparative also includes the home office allowance. The 2020/21 Practitioner's Guide requires that staff costs contain only salary, tax/NI and pension costs (previous guides have allowed travel costs to be included within staff costs). This means that the 2019/20 figure for staff costs as restated in the 20/21 AGAR will be £2809.</p> <p>3. The other payments comparative for 19/20 as restated in the 20/21 AGAR will be £6892, taking account of the changes to staff costs and other receipts.</p> <p>4. The Fixed Asset Register value for 19/20 includes revaluations that may not be in accordance with the requirements of the Practitioner's Guide. The figure approved by Council was £76218; that recalculated by the Clerk after the internal audit was £72409.</p> <p>The Council agreed to restate the 19/20 figures in the 20/21 AGAR. This has not been done.</p>				
10.2 – Unadjusted errors in 20/21 AGAR	<p>The following errors were not adjusted in the annual return approved by Council in May 2021:</p> <p>1. Staff costs includes £138 of costs relating to mileage and a home office allowance. This should have been shown in other payments.</p> <p>I recommend that the 20/21 comparatives are restated when the 21/22 AGAR is prepared, and that the internal audit is completed prior to Council's consideration in order to ensure that the figures approved by Council are compliant with the Practitioner's Guide.</p>	H	Noted. The AGAR had been signed off by all parties.		

10.3 – Ensure AGS assertions are correct	<p>The Council agreed to implement a number of internal audit recommendations following the 19/20 audit. The following were not implemented in spite of having been agreed: 2.9, 8.1, 8.2, 10.1.</p> <p>As the Council did not take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal audit, it should have responded 'no' to box 7 in the 2021/21 Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR. Instead it responded 'yes'. The Clerk noted that 'The recommendations were noted', but where high level recommendations have been made (indicating a fundamental control weakness), and the Council has agreed to take action, inaction cannot represent appropriate action.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council ensures that it implements all agreed audit recommendations, and that it correctly responds to AGS assurances in future.</p>	H	Report sent to Council for discussion	WL	
12.1 – Publish documents required by the Transparency Code	<p>I checked to see that the Council published on a website/webpage information that is up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the Transparency Code for smaller authorities. The Code requires that the Council publishes a range of information including lists of payments over £100, the signed AGAR (including accounts, annual governance statement, and annual internal audit report), bank reconciliation, and variance analysis, from the accounting year just ended, Councillor responsibilities, and details of public land and building assets.</p>	H	<p>All payments are listed on the website.</p> <p>AGAR was put up.</p> <p>I will ensure other documents are put up. Can it be confirmed how long these documents must stay online.</p>	WL	

	<p>I was unable to find the documents on the Council's website. There is a 'transparency code' link, but this links to the code itself rather than the detailed information. I asked that Clerk to advise where the publications required by the guidance are published, and attached a self-assessment which noted the details of the information to be published. The Clerk responded that 'The transparency code is from the government and covers everybody. Should every PC have a separate one?'</p> <p>I recommend that the Council ensures that the list of documents required by the Code are published, and not just the Code itself.</p>				
14.1 – Evidence of compliance with publications	<p>I checked to see that the authority complied with the publication requirements for the AGAR 2019/20. As a smaller Council, this meant the following needed to be published before 01/09/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Certificate of Exemption, page 3 AGAR •Annual Internal Audit Report 2018/19, page 4 AGAR •Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19, page 5 AGAR •Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2018/19, page 6 AGAR •Analysis of variances •Bank reconciliation •Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. 	H	All information will be published on completion of internal and external audit.	WL	

	<p>The public rights period ran from 01/09/20 to 13/10/20, which means that the AGAR publications should have been published on or before 31/08/20 (so that they were in place at midnight on 01/09/20). The Clerk noted on 10/09/20 that the 19/20 AGAR had not yet been put on the website as it was pending the conclusion of the internal audit.</p> <p>The certificate of exemption and note of period of public rights 19/20 were on the website at the date of the internal audit testing on 01/06/21. The other information was not. The Clerk noted that the other documents were put up and taken down.</p> <p>External audit has confirmed that, in the absence of a website audit trail, screenshots are now considered acceptable evidence of publication dates.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council ensures that all information is published in according with statutory timescales, and that the Clerk takes screenshots of all required publications on the date of upload in future, in order to prove compliance with the publication requirements.</p>				
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Councillors' responses to audit report (to be read in conjunction with this)

2.1 The Parish Council agreed that they were comfortable with the processes being used.

2.2 The Parish Council were content this matter was dealt with last year.

3.1 This is an area that would be followed up with DAPTC.

A Councillor stated they were comfortable to fill in for a short time.

This would be further discussed at the Ways of Working, working group.

3.2 A risk assessment would be placed on the next agenda (September 2021)

3.3 This matter had been resolved.

3.4 Significant concerns were raised by members that the auditor was being paid to read a magazine. It was agreed that this was not within the scope of the audit and was an overreach of an hour-by-hour contract.

4.1 Members were comfortable with their decision making process when setting the Precept.

4.2 Members agreed that the use of reserves was the business of the Parish Council, and that all transaction were discussed and minuted.

3.4 This had been minuted.

7.2 It was agreed that the use of suspense accounts was not appropriate to a small Parish Council and would make transactions harder to follow for a layman.

The Clerk will look at restating the AGAR with staffing costs.

8.1 It had been stated the previous year that assets had been previously brought on incorrectly.

Members were happy with the asset register.

10.1 It was agreed that the previous AGAR had been signed off by all parties.

It was queried why the same observation had been included elsewhere in the report, presumably at additional time and therefore additional cost.

10.2 The Clerk will look at restating the AGAR.

No member of the public had ever queried any documents.

10.3 It was confirmed by councillors that these recommendations of which discussed last year but only implemented where agreed with, in the context of MSA PC.

12.1 These will, once the audit process had been completed, be uploaded to the website.

14.1 Documents had been published and taken down.

No guidance had been given for how long this should stay up.

It was agreed that screen shots were an inappropriate recommendation.

