

**PUBLIC RIGHTS NOTIFICATION FOR HATHERTON & WALGHERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

To commence on 03/06/2024 through to 12/07/2024. This covers 30 working days and to include the first 10 days of July 2024.

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 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 Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, after the end of each financial year, complete Form 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 2024**. 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 (Form 2)** which is made up of:
    - c) **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
    - d) **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** must be completed and approved by the authority.
    - e) **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 2024**.

## 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 2023/24**, page 4
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, page 5
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24**, 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 Form 3 of the AGAR 2023/24 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 **£210 +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.

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 Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24, 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 2024. 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.

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

			
Hatherton & Walgherton			
Period Audited: April 2023-March 2024			
YEAR 23/24			
Objective (Automated)	QUESTIONS	Answer	Recommendations
Proper Bookkeeping	What systems are used - i.e. scribble/flat tax/Edge/Excel/Quickbooks etc.	Excel Spreadsheet	
Proper Bookkeeping	Is cashbook maintained and up to date?	bi-monthly	
Proper Bookkeeping	Is cashbook arithmetically correct?	Yes	
Proper Bookkeeping	Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	bi-monthly	
Proper Bookkeeping	What basis are the accounts made up on - cash or accruals?	Receipts & Payments	
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Has the council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations?	Yes, in the March 2023 and 2024 meetings	
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Has a Responsible financial officer been appointed with specific duties?	Yes	
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased?	Items over £1000 were not apparent in the cashbook	
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted?	Payments are supported by invoices. Payments are noted in the meeting minutes	

			
Hatherton & Walgherton			
Period Audited: April 2023-March 2024			
YEAR 23/24			
Objective (Automated)	QUESTIONS	Answer	Recommendations
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	VAT has not been claimed in several years. As a minimum this should be completed yearly	Strongly suggest you run a VAT claim once a year as a minimum
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Does the Council have General Power of Competence?	No.	
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Is £137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	There is a very small amount of £137 spend	For Clarification, I suggest you add "£137" to the description on the "Donations" tab as part of the guidance states this is required. Also, you need to know your number of Electors to ensure you comply with the £137 rules - for 23/24 the limit was £9.93 x No. of Electors. As you have spent £400 we have assumed you have more than 40 Electors in the Parish (£400/£9.93"
Risk Management Arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	None	
Risk Management Arrangements	Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment?	Risk Assessment Present	

FINAL SPEND AGAINST BUDGET

Expenses incurred in Financial Year 2023/24	Budget	Actual	Full Year Variance of Budget against Actual + Forecast Spend
	Bud (£)	Act (£)	Variance (£)
Audit Fees	202.50	294.00	-91.50
CHALC Fees	158.73	158.73	0.00
Clerk's Salary	2747.00	3,240.75	-493.75
Contingency	300.00	0.00	300.00
Donations	400.00	400.00	0.00
Electricity	100.00	93.67	6.33
Hire of Rooms / Zoom	280.00	180.00	100.00
Information Commissioner	40.00	40.00	0.00
Insurance	170.00	170.78	-0.78
Mileage Expenses	200.00	12.78	187.22
Neighbourhood Planning	450.00	0.00	450.00
Notice Board Maintenance	25.00	0.00	25.00
Parish Enhancement	1000.00	1,309.24	-309.24
Stationery / Postage	50.00	119.97	-69.97
Training	300.00	60.00	240.00
Unity Fee	0.00	45.66	-45.66
Website Hosting	55.00	52.27	2.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,478.23</b>	<b>6,177.85</b>	<b>300.38</b>

NB: Minus denote overspend

4.6%

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SUMMARY AND BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR 01/04/2023 TO 31/03/2024

<b>Reciepts &amp; Payments Summary - Balance Sheet for the Year 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024</b>			
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Totals (£)</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Totals (£)</b>
Opening Current Account	268.18	Audit Fees	294.00
Opening Deposit Account	5,236.55	CHALC Fees	158.73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,504.73</b>	Contingency	-
		Donations	400.00
		Electricity	93.67
<b>Receipts</b>		Hire of Rooms / Zoom	180.00
Precept	5,140.00	HMRC	661.51
CIL	1,193.18	Information Commissioner	40.00
Grant	-	Insurance	170.78
Bank Account Interest	55.91	Mileage Expenses	12.78
Unpresented Cheques	35.86	Neighbourhood Planning	-
Insurance claim	-	Notice Board Maintenance	-
Refund from previous year		Parish Enhancement	1,309.24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,424.95</b>	Staff Costs	2,579.24
		Stationery / Postage	119.97
		Training	60.00
		Website Hosting	52.27
		Unity Bank Fees	45.66
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,177.85</b>
		Closing Current Account	6,969.93
		Less payments that have co	1,779.07
		Plus unpresented cheques	560.97
		Cash in the Bank	5,190.86
	<b>11,929.68</b>		<b>11,929.68</b>