

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
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 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

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 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *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 and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- 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.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- 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 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
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', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		✓

**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

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

BILBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLIC WEBSITE ADDRESS www.bilbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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.			✓
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 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) 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

17/04/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

S Morris ACMA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

17/04/2025

*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).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

BILBROOK 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 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>'Yes' means that this authority: prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
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.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
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.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
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.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>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.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
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.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
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
			✓

***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:

07/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

010/25 g

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

Chair

G M Adams

Clerk

K Daker

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

BILBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	129,180	161,758	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. 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	97,500	105,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	43,370	46,913	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	46,852	52,331	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	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	61,439	103,914	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	161,758	157,426	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	161,758	157,426	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	RE STATED 267,812	292,655	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	0	0	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

K Daker REQUIRED

Date

07/05/2025.

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

07/05/2025.

as recorded in minute reference:

010/25 h

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

S Adams REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

Bilbrook Parish Council

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 2025; 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 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 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.

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

Not Applicable.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

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 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Forvis Mazars LLP

Date

23 September 2025

Attachment 1.1

Bank reconciliation

This reconciliation must include **all** bank and building society accounts and other short-term investments*. It **must** agree to Box 8 in the column headed “*Year ending 31 March 2025*” in Section 2 of the Annual Return. It will also agree to Box 7 where the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments (cash) basis, but not when an income and expenditure basis is used.

Parish Council Name: **Billbrook Parish Council**

Financial year ending: **31 March 2025**

Prepared by Karen Daker, Parish Clerk & RFO (Name and Position) Date: 10 April 2025

Balance per bank statements as at 31 March 2025:	£	£
Business Premium Account	£53,739	
Community Account	£14,751	
Equals Pre-Payment Card	£300	
Nationwide Building Society Instant Save	£88,636	
		£157,426
Petty cash float (if applicable)		£0
Less: any un-presented cheques at 31 March 2025 (normally only current account)		£0
Add: any un-banked cash at 31 March 2025		£0
e.g. Allotment rents banked 31 March 2025 (but not credited until 1 April 2025)		£0
Net balances as at 31 March 2025		£157,426
<i>The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (a receipts and payments account, which should be maintained even if your authority uses income and expenditure accounting) for the year, as follows:</i>		
CASH BOOK		
Opening Balance 1 April 2024	£161,758	
Add: Receipts in the year	£151,913	
Less: Payments in the year	(£156,245)	
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] as at 31 March 2025 (must equal net balances above)		£ 157,426

Attachment 1.2

Explanation of significant variances in the accounting statements – AGAR Section 2

Parish Council name: **Bilbrook Parish Council**

Please explain any variances of more than 15% between the totals for individual boxes in Section 2. We do not require explanations for variances of less than £200; however, in some cases there may be 'compensating' variances which leave the overall total for a box relatively unchanged – e.g. where there was a major one-off project in one year (e.g. contribution to village hall extension of £30,000), but a totally different expense of a similar size in the next (e.g. purchase of playground equipment of £28,000). In such cases, it would be helpful to provide an explanation of movements within each box. We also ask you to explain any change where there is a movement to or from zero. Please either use the proforma below or complete a separate schedule if more space is required.

Please see separate excel attachment as an alternative. It is at the discretion of clerks which template you choose to complete, but you must complete one of these templates as part of your return to us.

SEPARATE SHEET USED

Section 2	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Variance (+/-) £	Detailed explanation of variance (for each reason noted please include monetary values (to nearest £100))
Box 2 <i>Precept</i>				
Box 3 <i>Other income</i>				
Box 4 <i>Staff costs</i>				
Box 5 <i>Loan interest/ capital</i>				
Box 6 <i>Other payments</i>				
Box 7 <i>Balances carried forward</i>				If some of the year-end balances are earmarked for specific purposes rather than as a general reserve, please provide a breakdown. You do not need to explain the year-on-year variance for this box.
Box 9 <i>Fixed assets & long-term assets</i>				
Box 10 <i>Total borrowing</i>	0	0	0	

Attachment 1.3

Reconciliation between Box 7 and Box 8 in Section 2 (31/03/2025). Note – this form is only required for authorities preparing their accounts on an income and expenditure basis.

Parish Council name: **Bilbrook Parish Council**

There should only be a difference between Box 7 and Box 8 where the accounts are prepared on an Income & Expenditure basis and where there are year-end adjustments for debtors/prepayments and creditors/receipts in advance. Please provide details of the year-end adjustments, showing how the net difference between them is equal to the difference between Boxes 7 and 8.

Where the sum-total of any debtor, payments in advance, trade creditors or receipts in advance exceed £5k, a breakdown should be provided showing the individual balances making up the sum-total balance.

	£	£
Total of Box 7: Balances carried forward (31/3/2025)		157,426
Deduct: Debtors		
	0	
Deduct: Payments made in advance (prepayments)		
Total deductions		
Add: Creditors		
Add: Receipts in advance		
Total additions		
Total of Box 8: Total cash and short-term investments (31/3/2025) (must agree to the net balances on bank reconciliation)		157,426

Attachment 1.4

A breakdown of the types of reserves held between general reserves, earmarked reserves and restricted (ring-fenced)

Please refer to separate excel document sent to you in the email with this guidance.

SEPARATE SHEET USED

Attachment 2

Confirmation of contact details

Local Council Name: **Bilbrook Parish Council**

Please confirm the contact details for the Clerk, RFO (if applicable), and Chair to assist us in ensuring that our records are kept up to date.

Clerk name: Mrs K Daker	RFO name (if different to clerk) N/A	Chair name: Mrs S Adams
Clerk working hours (so we know when we can ring) 15 hours 10:00 am – 1:00 pm		
Is this person the primary contact: Yes		
Parish Council registered address: Bilbrook Parish Council Bilbrook Village Hall Joey's Lane Bilbrook WV8 1JL		Chair contact postal and email address Email: s.adams@cllr.bilbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk Postal address: Milbrook Cottage Lane Green Road Dam Mill Bilbrook WV8 2JS
Telephone: Primary contact number: 01902 840007 Mobile/alternative number: 07513 297222		Telephone: Primary contact number: 07787 533833 Mobile/alternative number: N/A
Email address (please do not provide a personal email unless the Clerk/RFO does not have a Council/Meeting email) clerk@bilbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk		

Attachment 3.1

Local council name: **Bilbrook Parish Council**

Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 234)

<p>1. Date of announcement: Friday 6th June 2025 (a)</p> <p>2. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounts to be audited and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them. For the year ended 31 March 2025 these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:</p> <p>(b) K Daker - Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Bilbrook Village Hall Joeys Lane Bilbrook WV8 1JL Tel: 01902 840007 Email: clerks@bilbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk Website: www.bilbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk</p> <p>commencing on (c) Monday 9th June 2025</p> <p>and ending on (d) Friday 18th July 2025</p> <p>3. Local Government Electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and• the right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the Authority (f). <p>The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose during the inspection period at 2 above.</p> <p>4. The auditor's limited assurance review is being conducted under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the National Audit Office' Code of Audit Practice. Your review is being carried out by:</p> <p>Forvis Mazars LLP, The Corner, Bank Chambers, 26 Mosley Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) K Daker - Parish Clerk & RFO</p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of this notice on your website.</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and contact details of the Clerk or other person to whom any person may apply to inspect the accounts.</p> <p>(c) And</p> <p>(d) The inspection period must be 30 working days in total and commence no later than 1 July 2025.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice</p>
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Attachment 3.2

What councils need to do to advertise the audit

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 as summarised in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (Statutory Instrument No. 234), and subsequent amendments and the Code of Audit Practice require that:

1. The accounts to be audited (the Annual Return) and other documents such as books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them must be made available for inspection by any person interested on reasonable notice, during a period of 30 working days selected by the Parish Council.
2. The notice advertising the inspection period must be published with the accounts and must state:
 - (1) The period of 30 working days during which the Annual Return, and other documents referred to in paragraph 1 above will be available for public inspection;
 - (2) Details of the manner in which notice should be given of an intention to inspect the accounts and other documents;
 - (3) The name and address of the auditor; and
 - (4) The provisions contained in section 26 (inspection of documents and questions at audit) and section 27 (right to make objections at audit) of the Act

The Parish Council may wish to use the template at attachment 3.2 to advertise the audit.

Please see the link below for the Accounts and Audit Regulations that apply at the date of drafting this guidance. If any amendment is passed that impacts on smaller authorities in 2024/25 we will inform you promptly.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/234/contents/made>

PART 5

Inspection and notice procedure

Period for the exercise of public rights

14.—(1) Any rights of objection, inspection and questioning of the local auditor conferred by sections 26 and 27 of the Act may only be exercised within a single period of 30 working days.

(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 in accordance with regulation 15(3).

(3) During the period for the exercise of public rights a relevant authority must make the documents referred to in section 26(1) of the Act available for inspection on reasonable notice at all reasonable times.

Commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights

15.—(1) The responsible financial officer for a relevant authority must, on behalf of the authority, ensure that commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights under regulation 9(1)(b) or 12(3)(a) (as the case may be), takes place on such a day that ensures that the period referred to in regulation 14(1) includes—

- (a) ~~the first 10 working days of June of the financial year immediately following the end of the financial year to which the statement relates, where that authority is a Category 1 authority; or~~
- (b) the first 10 working days of July of the financial year immediately following the end of the financial year to which the statement relates, where that authority is a Category 2 authority.

Attachment 3.3

Councils' Accounts: A Summary of Public Rights

The basic position

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect a council's/meeting's accounts. If you are entitled and registered to vote in local council elections then you (or your representative) have additional rights to ask the appointed auditor questions about the Council's accounts or object to an item of account contained within them.

The right to inspect the accounts

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year it must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. Having given the Council reasonable notice of your intentions, you then have 30 working days to look through the accounting statements in the Annual Return and any supporting documents. By arrangement, you will be able to inspect and make copies of the accounts and the relevant documents. You may have to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts

You can only ask the appointed auditor questions about the accounts. The auditor does not have to answer questions about the council's policies, finances, procedures or anything else not related to the accounts. Your questions must be about the accounts for the financial year just ended. The auditor does not have to say whether they think something the Council has done, or an item in its accounts, is lawful or reasonable.

The right to object to the accounts

If you think that the council has spent money that it should not have, or that someone has caused a loss to the council deliberately or by behaving irresponsibly, you can request the auditor to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law. You do this by sending a formal '*notice of objection*' to the auditor at the address below. **The notice must be in writing and copied to the council.** In it, you must tell the auditor why you are objecting and what you want the auditor to do about it. The auditor must reach a decision on your objection. If you are not happy with that decision, you can appeal to the courts.

You may also object if you think that there is something in the accounts that the auditor should discuss with the Council or tell the public about in a '*public interest report*'. You must follow the same procedure as outlined in the previous paragraph. The auditor must then decide whether to take any action. The auditor does not have to, but usually will, give reasons for his/her decision and you cannot appeal to the courts. More information is available on the National Audit Office website (see contact details below).

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your council. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or your solicitor. You may also be able to approach the Standards Committee of your local principal authority if you believe that a member of the council has broken the Code of Conduct for Members.

What else you can do

Instead of objecting, you can give the auditor information that is relevant to his/her responsibilities. For example, you can simply tell the auditor if you think that something is wrong with the accounts or about waste and inefficiency in the way the Council runs its services. You should make it clear that you are providing information rather than making a formal objection. You do not have to follow any set time limits or procedures. The auditor does not have to give you a detailed report of any subsequent investigation, but will usually tell you the outcome.

A final word

Councils, and so local taxpayers, must 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. The auditor will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts, you might have to pay for the action yourself.

Who should you contact?

For more detailed guidance on electors' rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication Council Accounts – a guide to your rights are available by calling the National Audit Office on 020 7798 7000 or downloading from the website <https://www.nao.org.uk/>

If you wish to contact your Council's appointed external auditor please write to:

Gavin Barker, Engagement Lead, Forvis Mazars LLP, local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Contacts

Limited Assurance Admin Team

Forvis Mazars

Judith Hunter

Elaine Nicholson

local.councils@mazars.co.uk

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Statement of Variances - Year ended 31 March 2025 - Bilbrook Parish Council

Instructions for completing this template:

1. Enter figures per the AGAR in the cells highlighted in light blue. This will automatically calculate a percentage change between years.
 2. If the variance is within 15%, no explanation is required. However, if it is outside this threshold, the percentage difference will highlight in yellow and an explanation is required.
 3. Explanations should be entered in each section, quantified to show the figures for each year. This will automatically calculate the remaining difference and the percentage unexplained.
 4. Once a sufficient explanation has been given to bring the percentage within 15% between years, the percentage difference cell will highlight as 'green' in the 'adjusted' line.
- Please note that for fixed assets, regardless of the percentage change in the figure, an explanation is required for the movement.

Item	2023-24	2024-25	Difference	%	Additional comments / explanations
Box 2: Precept or Rates and levies	97,500.00	105,000.00	7,500.00	7.7%	
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Box 2: Precept or Rates and levies (adjusted)			7,500.00	7.7%	No further explanation needed
Box 3: Total other receipts	43,370.00	46,913.00	3,543.00	8.2%	
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Box 3: Total other receipts (adjusted)			3,543.00	8.2%	No further explanation needed
Box 4: Staff costs	46,852.00	52,331.00	5,479.00	11.7%	
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Box 4: Staff costs (adjusted)			5,479.00	11.7%	No further explanation needed
Box 5: Loan interest/capital repayments	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Box 5: Loan interest/capital repayments (adjusted)			-	0.0%	No further explanation needed
Box 6: Other payments	61,439.00	103,914.00	42,475.00	69.1%	
Allotments Increase (Allotment accessibility project)	1,947	31,209	29,262	1503%	
Open Spaces Increase (Bollards (£9,386))	26,695	36,584	9,889	37%	
Christmas Increase (Purchased own Lights)	8,118	12,558	4,440	55%	
Professional Increase (Legal advice, N'hood Plan, IT Support)	4,504	7,452	2,948	65%	
Admin Increase (VoIP, Software, CCTV repair)	3,607	4,624	1,017	28%	
Climate Action Increase (air pollution monitor)	-	715	715		
Grants awarded Increase (less requests received)	2,338	2,809	471	20%	
Office Rent Increase (Rent increase)	4,407	4,654	247	6%	
Subscriptions Increase (SLCC increase)	955	1,126	171	18%	
Training Increase (Heights Staff Training)	602	695	93	15%	
Young People Engagement Increase (Flyers)	-	39	39		
Other Expenditure Decrease	20	13	7	-35%	
Elections Decrease (No election in 24-25)	210	-	210	-100%	
Remembrance Decrease (PA systems purchased in 23-24)	552	139	413	-75%	
Community Engagement Decrease (Coronation Event 23-24)	7,484	1,297	6,187	-83%	
Box 6: Other payments (adjusted)			-	0.0%	No further explanation needed
Box 9: Fixed assets plus long-term investments	267,812.00	292,655.00	24,843.00	9.3%	
			-		23/24 restated by £12,604 for war memorial (23/24 figure was £ 280,416)
Aldridge Bollards		8,739			
Christmas Lights		7,398			
Plot 17 Raised Beds		6,316			
Pasture Pumps x 2		979			
Welcome to Bilbrook signs		510			
Air Pollution Monitor		425			
Allotments Gate to Banks Field		342			
Assistants Mobile Phone		134			
Box 9: Fixed assets plus long-term investments (adjusted)			24,843.00	9.3%	No further explanation needed
Box 10: Total borrowings	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Box 10: Total borrowings (adjusted)			-	0.0%	No further explanation needed

Instructions:

Please complete the coloured boxes with figures per the AGAR and figures for earmarked reserves.

The 'Explanation Required?' box will indicate whether an explanation is required to explain reserves exceeding the tolerable threshold set by Forvis Mazars (1.15 x the higher of precept and total payments). If explanations are required, please document these in the rows below (*insert more rows where required*). Once a sufficient amount of explanations has been provided, this will be shown with a 'Yes' in the 'Explanation sufficient?' line.

Box 2	Precept	105,000	x 1.15 =	120,750
Box 4	Staff costs	52,331		
Box 5	Loan interest / capital repayments	0		
Box 6	Other payments	103,914		
		156,245	x 1.15 =	119,501
	Max level of reserves			120,750
Box 7	Balances carried forward			157,426
	Explanation required?			Yes
	<u>Explanation(s) for earmarked reserves:</u> NB: NOT 'general' funds/reserves			
	Village Improvements (Woodman Junction)			40,000
	Solar Farm Income			8,179
	Car Park Reserve			7,500
	Parish Elections			7,000
	Playpark/SkatePark repairs			5,426
	Allotments			4,330
	Bus Shelter			3,834
	War Memorial Replacement			1,000
	Menopause Meet-up funding			150
				77,419
	Reserves not earmarked			80,007
	Explanations sufficient?			Yes

