

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 Part 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 Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 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 2021**.
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 2021**. 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 2021
  - 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 2020/21

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 2021 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 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2021 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 Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21

- 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. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- 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 2021.
- 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.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **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.**
- 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 external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, 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 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 have been completed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 been reconciled to Box 8?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

SILVERDALE PARISH COUNCIL

www.silverdaleparish.org

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. If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it 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.			N/A

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

05/04/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Vivien Ann Evans

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

05/04/2021

\*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).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

SILVERDALE 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*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\*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:

05/05/21

and recorded as minute reference:

96/21/3

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

Chairman

H. Adamson

Clerk

CA

www.silverdaleparish.org

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

### SILVERDALE PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	76765	70604	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	27807	29206	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	8757	37066	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	10739	10938	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	31987	63961	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	70604	61976	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	70604	61976	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	103028	104765	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).
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 01/05/2021

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

05/05/21

as recorded in minute reference:

96/21/4

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

H Adamczuk

## Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

### 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 2021; 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 2020/21

(Except for the matters reported below)\* 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. (\*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

### 3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify/do not 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 2021.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date

## Introduction

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance designed to improve an organisation's operations by reviewing and reporting to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

The internal audit function must be independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the authority which are the subject of review. The person or persons carrying out internal audit must be conversant with Parish Council constraints.

Internal audit is an on-going function to test the continuing existence and adequacy of the authority's internal controls. Managing the authority's internal controls is a day-to-day function of the authority's staff and Councillors and not the responsibility of internal audit.

*Internal audit does not involve the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of an authority in order to detect error or fraud. (based on Governance and Accountability guidance)*

## Explanations

Internal audits should be undertaken at least once a year or with greater frequency if required by the Council or as determined by:

*Corrective actions from previous internal audits*

*Statutory/legal requirements*

*Audit Commission guidance*

*Council decisions*

*Council objectives and policy*

*Council internal reviews*

*Concerns raised by external auditors*

*Parishioner complaints*

*Employee concerns*

The internal auditor should:
<i>Understand basic accounting processes</i>
<i>Understand the role of internal audit in reviewing systems.</i>
<i>Understand risk management issues</i>
<i>Understand accounting requirements in terms of the statutory framework</i>
<i>Understand the operation of a parish council</i>
<i>Be impartial and objective</i>
<i>Review and prepare the internal audit checklist for the Clerk and/or the RFO</i>
<i>Review the previous internal audit report and actions implemented</i>
<i>Identify any necessary changes to internal controls</i>
<i>Ensure documentation listed on the audit checklist is available for review</i>
<i>Sample and observe process inputs/outputs e.g. review invoices, expenditure reports etc.</i>
<i>Record objective evidence to verify process compliance or non-compliance</i>
<i>Suggest corrective actions for other areas of non-compliance and/or recommendations for improvement.</i>
<i>Prepare and sign off an internal audit report and forward to the Clerk and/or the RFO(copy to Chairman)</i>

<b>Audit Opinion</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Good	There is a sound system of internal control
Adequate	There are identified weaknesses
Limited	Weaknesses are such that they constitute a risk.
Unsatisfactory	Control processes are open to significant error and non-compliance

<b>Insurance cover appropriate and adequate</b>			The historic accounting convention is one which I think best suits parish councils and I note most values are recorded at cost. I also note most sections in the insurance policy are based on replacement value I could not see a specific fidelity guarantee clause but would recommend, at least, an amount which is equal to the end of year reserve + the precept
<b>Is regular bank reconciliation carried out for each account?</b>		✓	I recommend that Council is provided with monthly bank reconciliations. Suggest a pdf copy of the statement is presented to Cllrs along with an extract from the cash book to demonstrate that the accounts are accurate
<b>Year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis and balance sheet completed</b>	✓		
<b>An audit trail exists</b>	✓		
<b>Where appropriate, debtors and creditors have been properly recorded</b>	✓		
<b>Is the Council a trustee, or involved in the administration of any charity.</b>	N/A		
<b>Two Council member signatures required for cheques or other orders for payment</b>	✓		
<b>Any corporate credit cards are held within defined limits and cleared monthly by direct debit</b>	N/A		
<b>A website is up to date and accurate</b>	✓		Excellent clarity
<b>Meetings are open to the public and press</b>	✓		
<b>Planning</b>	✓		
<b>Land Holdings</b>	✓		Appropriate asset value listed
<b>Appropriate measures have been implemented for GDPR</b>	✓		

## Conclusion

It is clear from the excellent records that Silverdale Parish is both providing an excellent service to its charge payers and has, together with its efficient Clerk, created a smoothly running Council.  
I have no further comments other than those above.

*V A Evans* (Mrs) Cert HE Community and Governance



<b>Overall Internal Audit Assurance Rating:</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Criteria**

	Compliant		Comments
	Yes	No	
<b>Proper Book Keeping</b>	✓		
<b>Cashbook maintained/up to date</b>	✓		
<b>Cashbook arithmetic correct</b>	✓		
<b>Cashbook regularly balanced</b>	✓		
<b>Standing orders and financial regs reviewed and controls over money are embedded in Standing Orders and Financial Statements</b>			
<b>Purchases above a de-minimis amount have been competitively purchased</b>	✓		
<b>Cashbook payments are supported by invoices, authorised, and minuted</b>	✓		
<b>VAT has been administered correctly</b>	✓		
<b>S137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits</b>	✓		
<b>Minutes identify any unusual financial activity</b>	✓		
<b>Annual risk assessment minuted</b>	✓		
<b>Internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed</b>	✓		
<b>Precept supported by budget figures which agree with notification to DC</b>	✓		
<b>Expenditure against budget regularly reported to the Council</b>	✓		
<b>Significant variances from budget explained</b>	✓		
<b>Income properly recorded and promptly banked</b>	✓		
<b>All petty cash spent is recorded and supported by invoices/receipts?</b>	N/A		
<b>All employees have contracts of employment, with clear terms and conditions</b>	✓		
<b>Salaries paid agree with those approved by Council</b>	✓		
<b>Other payments to employees legitimate and approved by the Council</b>	✓		
<b>PAYE/NIC been properly administered</b>	✓		
<b>The Council maintains a register of all material assets which is up to date</b>			