

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 2

To be completed only by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other smaller authorities... 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 2024/25

- 1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, 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:
- does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
- 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 exempt themselves 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 2025; 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:
- i) Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4) must be completed by the authority's internal auditor;
- ii) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5) must be completed and approved by the authority;
- iii) 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 2025.

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 2024/25 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. Through the words 'internal auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

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Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

MELBURY OSMOND PARISH COUNCIL
www.melburysomond.co.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 risk and planned assurance strategy 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 or a sample of adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No	Not covered?
A. Appropriation 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 published 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 received.	✓		
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 basis of the accounting books, receipts and payments or income and expenditure or referred to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debits 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, see '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 ended by this AGAR, the authority carried out a review 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).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		

O. (For local councils only) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.
For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed that any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed.
Date(s) Internal audit undertaken: May 23 2025
Name of person who carried out the internal audit: JHR Senior
Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: JHR Senior
Date: 23/05/2025
If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness to control identified (add separate sheets if needed).
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).

Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25, 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 2025. 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 2025. 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. 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 Chair, 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 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 'no' answers mean you may not have met requirements	Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?	✓
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓
Section 1	For statements to which the response is 'no', is an explanation available for publication?	✓
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 variances been published where required?	✓
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓
	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? (Local Councils only)	✓

\*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.aad.gov.uk

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 2

Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

MELBURY OSMOND PARISH COUNCIL	
Agreed	No (must state this authority)
1. We have set in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and relevant to the authority.	✓
3. We took all reasonable steps to ensure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with legal, regulatory and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓
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.	✓
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage these risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either before or after the year-end, might have a material effect on the authority's financial position, assets and liabilities, and where appropriate, have included them in this accounting statement.	✓
9. (For local councils only) That funds including charitable, in our capacity as the sole managing trustee of a discharged local authority, or in our capacity as the sole managing trustee of the fund(s)/funds, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	✓

\*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: 27/05/2025
Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:
Chair: R. R. R.
Clerk: R. R. R.

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:
www.melburysomond.co.uk

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2024/25 Form 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 2025, 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 2025 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than 30 June 2025 notifying the external auditor.

MELBURY OSMOND PARISH COUNCIL
certifies that during the financial year 2024/25, 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 2024/25: £6,500
Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2024/25: £11,099

- 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 Form 2 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of £210 +VAT will be payable. By signing this Certificate of Exemption you are confirming that:
• The authority was in existence on 1st April 2021
• In relation to the preceding financial year (2023/24), 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 decided an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act. If the above statements apply and 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 2025. Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer: R. R. R. Date: 27/05/25
Signed by Chair: R. R. R. Date: 27/05/25
Generic email address of Authority: melburysomond@parish-council.gov.uk Telephone number: 0776657559

\*Published web address: www.melburysomond.co.uk

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 2025. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 +VAT.

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Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25

MELBURY OSMOND PARISH COUNCIL	
Year ending	Notes and guidance
31 March 2025	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report 0 or Nil Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
1. Balances brought forward	6754 8833
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	6800 6800
3. (+) Total other receipts	0 0
4. (-) Staff costs	0 0
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0 0
6. (-) All other payments	4721 11099
7. (+) Balances carried forward	8833 4535
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	8833 4535
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	15101 18628
10. Total borrowings	0 0

For Local Councils only: Yes No N/A
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) ✓
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) ✓

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: R. R. R. Date: 27-05-2025
Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved: R. R. R.