

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22 Form 2

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

## Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, following the end of each financial year, complete Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices*, unless the authority:
  - a) does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
  - b) does not wish to certify itself as exempt
2. Smaller authorities where the higher of all gross annual income or gross annual expenditure **does not exceed** £25,000 and that meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption **are able to declare themselves exempt** from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review **provided** the authority **completes**:
  - a) The **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3 and returns a copy of it to the external auditor **either** by email or by post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2022**. 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:
    - **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
    - **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** must be completed and approved by the authority.
    - **Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6)** must be completed and approved by the authority.**NOTE: Authorities certifying themselves as exempt SHOULD NOT send the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor.**
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement before approving Section 2 Accounting Statements and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2022**.

## Publication Requirements

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

- **Certificate of Exemption, page 3**
- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22, page 4**
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22, page 5**
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22, page 6**
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

## Limited Assurance Review

Any smaller authority may request a limited assurance review. If so, the authority should not certify itself as exempt or complete the Certificate of Exemption. Instead it should complete Form 3 of the AGAR 2021/22 and return it to the external auditor together with the supporting documentation requested by the external auditor. The cost to the authority for the review will be **£200 +VAT**.

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

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

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

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

## Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22, 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 2022. 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 2022**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT for each letter.
- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. Proper Practices are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order, consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed annual return. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness at the meeting at which it is signed off.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- The authority must publish numerical and narrative explanations for significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 6**. Guidance is provided in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which may assist.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2021) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2022).
- 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 2022**.

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

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

## Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2021/22 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 2022, 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 2022 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2022** notifying the external auditor.

STOCKTON ON THE FOREST PARISH COUNCIL

certifies that during the financial year 2021/22, 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 2021/22:

£16260 - 00

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2021/22:

£ 8534.00.

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 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£200 +VAT** will be payable.

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

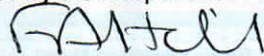
- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2018
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2020/21), the external auditor **has not**:
  - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
  - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
  - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
  - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
  - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

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

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage\* before 1 July 2022.

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

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer



Date

25/05/2022

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

25/05/2022

Signed by Chairman



Date

25/05/2022

as recorded in minute reference:

APCM 22/11

Generic email address of Authority

Stockton PC @ outlook . com

Telephone number

01904 468773

\*Published web address

www. Stockton on the Forest . org . 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 2022. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT**

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, 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 2021/22 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.			✓ PETTY CASH NOT HELD
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 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")	✓		
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements		✓	} NOT SEEN ON WEBSITE AT CURRENT DATE.
M. The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) 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 2020/21 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

28/04/2022

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

JANEY BENNETT  
YORKSHIRE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

*Janey Bennett*

Date 28/04/2022

\*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 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

STOCKTON ON THE FOREST 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 2022, that:

	Agreed			'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.		✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓			during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
			✓	

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chairman

Clerk

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

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

www.stocktonontheforest.org.uk

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

### STOCKTON ON THE FOREST PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	
1. Balances brought forward	31371	33145	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 <i>RESTATE</i>	7621	7801	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts <i>RESTATE</i>	1000	8459	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	4554	4422	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	2293	4112	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	33145	40871	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	33145	40871	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	63519	63906	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	N/A
			✓
			The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. <i>N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 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

*[Handwritten Signature]*

Date

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

*[Handwritten Signature]*

YORKSHIRE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES  
JASPER COTTAGE, SESSAY, THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE YO7 3BE  
TELEPHONE 01845 501660

Mrs Fiona Hill  
Clerk to Stockton on the Forest Parish Council  
The Byre  
Fieldhouse Farm  
Thornton-le-Clay  
York  
YO60 7QA

Dear Mrs Hill

**To the Chairman and Members of Stockton on the Forest Parish Council  
Internal Audit of Accounts for the Financial Year ending 31 March 2022**

I am pleased to inform you that the internal audit is complete. Appropriate tests and checks were carried out on the accounts and internal controls to confirm that the systems of financial and other controls over the council's activities and operating procedures are effective. Following that I can confirm that internal controls are operating as expected and there are no matters to give cause for concern.

The current situation on outstanding matters raised in previous reports is noted in the paragraphs below. At the final visit I completed as required the Annual Internal Auditors Report contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22 (AGAR). Unfortunately, I was unable to gain assurance that all of the council's controls achieved the necessary standard and as a consequence four of the required control objectives have not been met. This is detailed in the following paragraphs.

Control Objective C The authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

A previous report recommended that the review of governance documents including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Risk Management documents be completed once the pandemic situation was over to ensure that they remained relevant, were being adhered to and that any new risks were identified and appropriate measures put in place to address those risks.

These reviews were completed in 2020/21 with the exception of the Risk Management documents which were to be reviewed in May 2021. This remains outstanding and should be carried out as soon as possible to ensure that the council continue to meet their responsibility for adequate financial management and good governance.

Control Objectives L, M, and N Publication of Information

These objectives concern the publication of information relating to the accounts and audit for the 2020/21 accounts and any other relevant information in line with the transparency code requirements. None of this information was published on a website at the time of the audit.

Insurance

Previous reports have recommended that the council reconcile their insured assets with the asset register and consider adopting a minimum value below which an asset need not be insured as it was not clear whether the new assets added in 2017/18 were included in the current insurance cover as no schedule was available. This review has been carried out but some assets still remain to be added to the insurance schedule. This will be done in the near future.

I would like to thank the clerk for her assistance and attention during the audit.

Yours sincerely

*JL Bennett*

JL Bennett  
28 April 2022

PARTNERS ~ KC Stephenson Tel: 0113 2585610  
RF Entwistle Tel 01845 501660  
PRINCIPAL AUDITOR ~ Mrs JL Bennett Tel: 01924 671829



Stockton-on-the-Forest Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2022

Balance b/f 01 April 2021	33145.42
Add receipts	16259.71
	<u>49405.13</u>
Less payments	8534.69
Balance c/f	<u>40870.44</u>

Balance at bank and in hand:

Investment account	10810.19
Current account	30681.02
Petty Cash	0.00
	<u>41491.21</u>

Unpresented items:

Ref	Amount
101293	155.72 ✓
101294	449.20 ✓
101296	15.85 ✓

<u>0.00</u>	<u>620.77</u>	<u>40870.44</u>	0.00
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S106

		B/F
Fox Inn	90 The Vill	12/02909/FUL
Chapel Farm	111 The Vill	12/01216/FUL
Aspden House	65 The Vill	13/03587/FUL

A	B	C	Total
9489.96			9489.96
5647.95	2420.55	3457.93	11526.43
999.11	428.19	611.69	2038.99
3304.56	1416.24	2023.20	6744.00
<u>19441.58</u>	<u>4264.98</u>	<u>6092.82</u>	<u>29799.38</u>
		1500.00	1500.00
9585.00			9585.00
		500.00	500.00
		490.00	490.00
<u>9856.58</u>	<u>4264.98</u>	<u>3602.82</u>	<u>17724.38</u>

A = Play 49%  
 B = Amenity Open Space 21%  
 C = Sports Pitches 30%

26/04/2017	Cricket Club	Grant	101137
29/11/2017	Playscheme	New Equip	101166
24/04/2019	Cricket Club	Grant	101220
31/07/2019	Petanque Club	Grant	101235

<b>S106</b>	<b>17724.38</b>
Website	22.61
Transparency Code	815.18
Notice Board	0.00
Ring Fenced Funding	<u>18562.17</u>

Earmarked Funds: 2018/2019

Street Furniture	2500.00
Play Area	2500.00
Extreme Weather Fund	500.00
	<u>5500.00</u>

Parish Council Funds	<u>16808.27</u>
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Stockton-on-the-Forest Parish Council

Inc&Exp 16259.71  
 S/b Zero 0.00

RECEIPTS 2021-2022

Date	Payer	Description	Amount	Precept	Interest	VAT	Grant	Insurance	DT
			<b>16259.71</b>	<b>8150.00</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>138.28</b>	<b>5900.00</b>	<b>372.00</b>	<b>1698.35</b>
23/04/2021	CYC	DT	1698.35						0.00
28/04/2021	CYC	Precept	4075.00	4075.00					0.00
07/06/2021	Barclays	Interest	0.27		0.27				0.00
19/08/2021	Aviva	RTA Damage Bench	372.00					372.00	0.00
06/09/2021	CYC	Play Area Grant	5900.00				5900.00		0.00
29/09/2021	Barclays	Interest	0.27		0.27				0.00
29/09/2021	CYC	Precept	4075.00	4075.00					0.00
12/11/2021	HMRC	VAT Refund	138.28			138.28			0.00
06/12/2021	Barclays	Interest	0.27		0.27				0.00
07/03/2022	Barclays	Interest	0.27		0.27				0.00

