

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 £15 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 2025/26

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 2026**.
 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 2026** 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 2026
 - 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 2025/26Unless 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 Return **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 2026 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 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 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) 2025/26

- 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 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- 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 which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **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.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 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 2026**

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 2026 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 2025/26

WORTHANTS CALC LTD

INTERNAL AUDIT

SIGNED.....*GAH*

WELDON PARISH COUNCIL

www.weldonparishcouncil.gov.uk, previously www.weldonparishcouncil.co.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, 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 2025/26 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. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all 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 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 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 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 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 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	☒		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.		☒	
P. (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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

15/05/2026 + 19/05/2026

JULIA TUFNAIL

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

GAH

Date

19/05/2026

*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 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

WELDON 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 2026, 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 have assured 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.
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.		✓	has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so. - adopted @ May 2026 meeting

*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:

01/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

26-346

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

WELDON PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
1. Balances brought forward	151,744	164,716	<i>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.</i> <i>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.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	150,000	162,000	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	25,178	34,387	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	26,021	33,553	<i>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.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	136,185	157,082	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	164,716	170,468	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	164,716	170,468	<i>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.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	266,028	273,359	<i>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.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			<i>For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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.

[Signature]

Date

14/05/2026

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

01/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

26.346.

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

[Signature]

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of

WELDON 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 2026 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 2025/26

(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 2025/26

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 2026

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

Bank reconciliation – pro forma

This reconciliation should include **all** bank and building society accounts, including short term investment accounts. It **must** agree with the column headed "Year ending 31 March 2026" in Section 2 of the AGAR – and will also agree to Box 7 where the accounts are prepared on a credit and payments basis. Please complete the highlighted boxes, remembering that unpresented cheques should be entered as negative numbers.

Name of smaller authority:

WELDON PARISH COUNCIL

County area (local councils and parish meetings only):

North Northants Council

Financial year ending 31 March 2026

Prepared by (Name and Role):

Claire Ducker, Clerk & RFO

Date:

31/03/2026

	£	£
Balance per bank statements as at 31/3/2026:		
Instant Access account	186,955.69	
Current Account	3,439.66	
account 3		
account 4		
[add more accounts if necessary] account 5		
account 6		
account 7		
account 8		
		190,395.35
Petty cash float (if applicable)	n/a	-
Less: any unpresented cheques as at 31/3/2026 (enter these as negative numbers)		
Transfer to current account	- 30,000.00	
Scribe	- 88.80	
Clerk Pension	- 173.19	
CYPN Yth Wrker paye	- 1,790.80	
[add more lines if necessary] Grant to Weldon PCC	- 2,975.00	
Grant to St Marys Church	- 7,400.00	
Grant to Weldon CC	- 7,500.00	
item 8		
		- 49,927.79
Add: any un-banked cash as at 31/3/2026		
Transfer from instant access account	30,000.00	
		30,000.00
Net balances as at 31/3/2026 (Box 8)		170,467.56

Explanation of variances – pro forma

Name of smaller authority: **WELDON PARISH COUNCIL**
County area (local councils and District Councils): **NOT A MEMBER OF THE JUNCIL**

Insert figures from Section 2 of the ACAR in all Blue highlighted boxes
Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:
• variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200).
• variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year.
• New from 2025/26 onwards: variances of £500,000 or more in Box 3 require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year for smaller authorities with income and/or expenditure exceeding £5,500,000

	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses (trigger below based on figures input. DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES)	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	151,744	164,716			NO	Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required. Balance brought forward does not agree, query this	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	150,000	162,000	12,000	8.00%	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	25,178	34,387	9,209	36.59%	YES		VAS grants £12,380 other grants recd £3,580
4 Staff Costs	26,021	33,653	7,532	28.95%	YES		Clerk's salary costs £21,100 Youth Development Worker salary costs £12,455
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
6 All Other Payments	136,165	157,092	20,897	15.34%	YES		Set up of new website £2,000, replacement door to storage unit £3,600 20mph application £4,000, VAS signs £13,150
7 Balances Carried Forward	164,716	170,458				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	164,716	170,765				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and	286,026	273,359	7,331	2.76%	NO		
10 Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Weldon Parish Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	Julia Tufnail	Date of report:	19.05.2026
Year ending:	31 March 2026	Date audit carried out:	15&19.05.2026

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

Firstly, I would like to thank your Clerk for their help in conducting the Internal Audit for 2025-2026. I have conducted the Internal Audit following the NCALC IA sheets and the internal control objectives of the AGAR. I have done an audit test on 3 random payments which follow through.

Following the internal control objectives, I have the following comments:

It is noted that the documentation for Assertion 10 of the AGAR was not approved until the May 2026 meeting as mentioned on the AGAR, so I have had to answer "no" to Objective O.

I would recommend that the VAT reclaim is done quarterly rather than monthly, which is more usual for a Council the size of Weldon, as it will free up some of the Clerk's time.

Please note: A Council meeting can only be closed via Resolution of the Council on a particular occasion and for a particular purpose (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. This also applies to Committees of the Council.

I would also recommend that your Clerk should take the CiLCA course as part of her training progression.

Yours sincerely

Julia Tufnail

Internal Auditor to the Council

juliatufnail.internalaudit@gmail.com

07309 719764

The figures submitted in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return are:

	Year ending 31 March 2025	Year ending 31 March 2026
1. Balances brought forward	151744	164716
2. Annual precept	150000	162000
3. Total other receipts	25178	34387
4. Staff costs	26021	33553
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. Total other payments	136185	157082
7. Balances carried forward	164716	170468
8. Total Value of Cash & Short Term Inv	164716	170468
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	266028	273359
10. Total borrowings	0	0

The proper practices referred to in Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (2024)*. It is a guide to the accounting practices to be followed by local councils and it sets out the appropriate standard of financial reporting to be followed. A copy of the guide is available for free download from:

<https://northantscalc.gov.uk/practitioners-guide>.