

# Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

## Accounting statement 2024-25 for:

Name of body:

Wick Community Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 (£)	31 March 2025 (£)	
<b>Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments</b>			
1. Balances brought forward	27165	27548	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Must agree to line 7 of the previous year.
2. (+) Income from local taxation/levy	9000	9000	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	2767	4917	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, taxable allowances, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and termination costs. Exclude reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).
6. (-) Total other payments	11384	9401	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	27548	32064	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
<b>Statement of balances<sup>0</sup></b>			
8. (+) Debtors	0	0	<b>Income and expenditure accounts only:</b> Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	27548	32064	<b>All accounts:</b> The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held at 31 March. This must agree with the reconciled cashbook balance as per the bank reconciliation.
10. (-) Creditors	0		<b>Income and expenditure accounts only:</b> Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	27548	32064	<b>Total balances should equal line 7 above:</b> Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	14712	14065	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.
13. Total borrowing	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

## Annual Governance Statement

We acknowledge as the members of the Council, our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed?		'YES' means that the Council:	Toolkit
	Yes	No*		
1. In consultation with the community, we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities.	Yes		Has consulted with the community and focussed its activities to meet the community's needs	A, C
2. We have adopted a Code of Conduct for members and officers and implemented an appropriate training plan for members to ensure all councillors understand their role and responsibilities.	Yes		Ensures that councillors understand and are equipped to deliver their roles and responsibilities.	B
3. We have ensured that we electronically publish the information the Council is required to publish by law, on its website at <a href="https://wickcc.wales">[https://wickcc.wales]</a> .	Yes		Is transparent about its activities and provides the public with all information required by law	A, C, D, E
4. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations when exercising its functions, including employment of staff and payment of allowances to members.	Yes		Has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it does so	
5. We have adopted standing orders, financial regulations and terms of reference and ensure that these are followed when conducting business including functions delegated to committees.	Yes		Has adopted rules and procedures to govern how the Council conducts its business including procurement of goods and services.	B, E
6. We have put in place arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective financial management including the setting and monitoring of the Council's budget</li> <li>• Maintenance and security of accurate and up to date accounting and other financial records</li> <li>• Identifying potential liabilities, commitments, events and transactions that may have a financial impact on the Council.</li> </ul>	Yes		Calculated its budget requirement in accordance with the law and properly monitors its financial position throughout the year	D
7. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control and management of risk, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption including clearly documented procedures for authorising and making payments</li> <li>• assessment and management of risks facing the Council</li> <li>• an adequate and effective system of internal audit and reviewed the effectiveness of these arrangements.</li> </ul>	Yes		Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge including arranging for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the body.	D, E
8. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.	Yes		Considered and taken appropriate action to address weaknesses /issues brought to its attention by internal and external auditors.	D, E
9. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.	Yes		Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect the body's accounts as set out in the notice of audit issued by the Auditor General.	E
10. General power of Competence – The Council has resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence set out in Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021		No	Meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the general Power of Competence	E

\* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

## Additional disclosure notes

Include here any additional disclosures the Council considers necessary to aid the reader's understanding of the accounting statement and/or the annual governance statement

### The following information is provided to assist the reader to understand the accounting statement and/or the Annual Governance Statement

#### 1. Expenditure under S137 Local Government Act 1972

Section 137(1) of the 1972 Act permits the Council to spend on activities for which it has no other specific powers if the Council considers that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, the area or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants, providing that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure. Section 137(3) also permits the Council to incur expenditure for certain charitable and other purposes. The maximum expenditure that can be incurred under both section 137(1) and (3) for the financial year 2024-25 was £10.81 per elector.

In 2024-25, the Council made payments totalling £1740.48 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

#### 2. Part 10. WCC has not adopted General Power of Competence

#### 3. Model Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment and Asset Register are reviewed/accepted/adopted at AGM in May

## Trust Funds

Trust funds – The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing trust fund(s)/assets. We exclude transactions related to these trusts from the Accounting Statement. In our capacity as trustee, we have discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s) including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.		N/A	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
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## Council approval and certification

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements and the annual governance statement in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the Act) and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

<b>Certification by the RFO</b> I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return present fairly the financial position of the Council, and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2025.	<b>Approval by the Council</b> I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference:
<b>RFO signature:</b> 	<b>Minute ref:</b> 25.061.02  <b>Chair signature:</b> 
<b>Name:</b> Mr Philip Murphy	<b>Name:</b> David Ambrose
<b>Date:</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	<b>Date:</b> 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2025

\* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

## Auditor General's report and audit opinion

I certify that I have completed the audit of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 of **Wick Community Council**. My audit has been conducted on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales and in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and guidance issued by the Auditor General for Wales.

### **Audit opinion: Qualified**

Except for the matters reported below in my Basis for Qualification, on the basis of my audit, in my opinion no matters have come to my attention to give cause for concern that, in any material respect, the information reported in this Annual Return:

- has not been prepared in accordance with proper practices;
- that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met;
- is not consistent with the Council's governance arrangements; and
- that the Council does not have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

### **Basis of Qualification**

#### **Annual Governance Statement**

In my opinion, the Annual Governance Statement is not consistent with the Council's internal controls and governance arrangements for the year:

- The Council's proper arrangements for making payments require that all payments are approved by the Council. My audit identified that 17 out of 21 payments tested do not appear to have been approved in a Council meeting.
- Additionally, we were unable to confirm 2 out of the 3 income transactions that we sampled for testing to adequate supporting evidence.
- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to create and publish a plan for councillor and staff training. The Welsh Government provides statutory guidance on this, which states that the plan must be approved by the full council and include details on the type of training, participant numbers, timeframe, and cost.
- The training plan provided for audit does not contain the basic information required above.

#### **Other matters and recommendations**

I draw the Council's attention to the following matters and recommendations which do not affect my audit opinion but should be addressed by the Council.

**Insurance coverage**

The Council’s insurance coverage is insufficient. The fidelity guarantee of £25,000 is less than the balance carried forward at the year end of £32,064, so the coverage is not adequate.

Additionally, the insured sums per the insurance policy schedule for the Chairman’s chain of office and the council’s portable play equipment are less than their values in the asset register, meaning that the coverage is insufficient in respect of these assets.

We recommend that the council ensures that it has sufficient insurance coverage for all of its assets, and that the fidelity guarantee provided is greater than the combined total of the balance brought forward and the precept for the year, to ensure that the council is insulated from risk.

There are no further matters I wish to draw to the Council’s attention.

 <b>Richard Harries, Director, Audit Wales</b> <b>For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales</b>	<b>Date: 28/01/2026</b>
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## Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body: **Wick Community Council**

The Council's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, has included carrying out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ending 31 March 2025.

The internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Council'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 the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the following control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
1. Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	Yes				I have examined the Community Council's records and concluded they are in good order.
2. Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes				Financial Regulations have been met. Payments are supported by invoices, expenditure approved by Council and minuted. The Council reclaimed VAT from HMRC for year 2023/24 (in July 2024).
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes				The Risk Register was reviewed and agreed by Councillors in June 2024 and May 2025. RFO advised that an amendment proposed by the clerk to add another signatory to bank mandate was accepted by Councillors
4. The annual precept/levy/resource demand requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.	Yes				The budget was monitored throughout the year and reported to Council in November when draft budget was considered. The Council approved its budget in December 2024 for financial year 2024/25.
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes				The precept was received and paid directly to bank account. Please refer to variances document for explanations. VAT was accounted for and reclaimed.
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts. Expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes				RFO advised that there was no use of petty cash for financial year 2024/25.
7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with contracts/ minuted approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes				Councillors do not receive a salary, and there were no expenses or allowances paid during the financial year 2024/25.
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	Yes				The Asset Register is up to date to 31st March 2025.

\* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
9. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	Yes				Reconciled bank balances are reported to council each month and minuted. A reconciled balance sheet is sent to councillors each quarter. A summary of transactions is reported to Council quarterly and at year-end. Budget Monitoring takes place in November assisting discussions regarding the proposed budget. RFO has advised that a councillor, not directly involved in the council's finances has agreed to sign off the end-of-year reconciliation – see documents supplied. This will take place quarterly in 2025/26
10. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with the cashbook, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes				Accounting statements are correctly prepared on a receipts and payments basis.
11. Trust funds (including charitable trusts). The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.			N/A		

**For any risk areas identified by the Council (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:**

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
12. Lease with Vale Council	Yes				The RFO has explained that WCC have not signed a lease with Vale Council for the Sports Pavilion. This should happen during summer 2025. Councillors accept that signing the lease will lead to additional cost and probable increases to the precept. This may also include recruitment of a part-time caretaker or building manager and the Risk Assessment identifies these risks
13. Budget	Yes				A report was prepared by RFO recommending that WCC approve its budget with a small deficit. This is because the council can pay for anticipated costs of managing the pavilion from the large surplus that has built up resulting from delays signing the lease.
14.			N/A		

\* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

\* 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).

\*\* 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, internal audit must explain why not.

~~[My detailed findings and recommendations which I draw to the attention of the Council are included in my detailed report to the Council dated \_\_\_\_\_.] \* Delete if no report prepared.~~

### Internal audit confirmation

~~I~~~~we~~ confirm that as the Council's internal auditor, ~~I~~~~we~~ have not been involved in a management or administrative role within the body (including preparation of the accounts) or as a member of the body during the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. I also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest surrounding my appointment.

**Name of person who carried out the internal audit:** Richard Christopher

**Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:**



**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025