

Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Accounting statement 2025-26 for:

Name of body: **WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 (£)	31 March 2026 (£)	Please round all figures to nearest £. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or nil balances. All figures must agree to the underlying financial records for the relevant year.
Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments			
1. Balances brought forward	27548	32064	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	4917	21271	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	9401	18461	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	32064	43874	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances			
8. (+) Debtors	0	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	32064	43874	All accounts: 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	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	32064	43874	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	14065	31288	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, that for the year ended 31 March 2026:

	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	No	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 https://wickcc.wales .	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: - Effective financial management including the setting and monitoring of the Council's budget and preparation and approval of the annual accounts - Maintenance and security of accurate and up to date accounting and other financial records - Identifying potential liabilities, commitments, events and transactions that may have a financial impact on the Council.	Yes		Calculated its budget requirement in accordance with the law and properly monitors its financial position throughout the year and has prepared and approved its accounts in accordance with legislation	D
7. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control and management of risk, including: - measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption including clearly documented procedures for authorising and making payments - assessment and management of risks facing the Council - an adequate and effective system of internal audit and reviewed the effectiveness of these arrangements.	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		No	Meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the general Power of	E

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

out in Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021			Competence	
--	--	--	------------	--

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.

* Q.2 - Annual Governance Statement.

The Code of Conduct is adopted by WCC. In the [Auditor General's Report](#), Audit Wales advised a training plan must be produced for councillors. This did not happen for year 2025/26, though 3 training courses did take place.

* Q.10 - General power of Competence.

The Council has not resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence

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 2025-26 was £11.10 per elector.

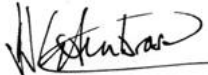
In 2025-26, the Council made payments totalling £2418 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

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.	Yes	No	N/A	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
---	-----	----	-----	---

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.

Certification by the RFO 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 2026.	Approval by the Council I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference:
	Minute ref: 26.064.03 https://wickcc.wales/minutes/
RFO signature: 	Chair signature: 
Name: Mr Phillip Murphy	Name: Mr David Ambrose
Date: 21 st May 2026	Date: 21 st May 2026

* 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 2026 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: Unqualified

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.

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:

Accounting Statement – Fixed Assets

The Annual Return originally provided for audit included a typographical error in line 13 Fixed Assets. The value of fixed assets as at 31 March 2025 was reported as £14,712. This version of the annual Return was approved on 21 May 2026.

The Accounting Statement is inconsistent with the 2024-25 Accounting Statement. The Clerk provided an amended version on 30 June 2026 correcting the mis-statement.

We recommend that the Council checks the arithmetic accuracy of the accounting statement and makes the necessary corrections before the accounts are approved.

Annual Governance Statement – Assertion 2

The Council has provided both a positive and a negative response. The negative response relates to the Council not having prepared and published a training plan as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

We recommend that the Council creates a training plan to ensure that all members understand and are properly equipped to fulfil their role.

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

 Deryck Evans, Audit Manager, Audit Wales For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales	Date: 25/09/2026
---	-------------------------

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 2026.

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.

Note: The Internal Auditor has not provided any other report/information

	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 and payments are supported by invoices. Payments less than £100 for cleaning and maintenance are delegated to Clerk/RFO under financial regulations. The Auditor General's Report - Link advised that payments must be approved by Council. The RFO advised that unless delegated to Clerk/RFO all payments are approved by council, but not always correctly recorded in minutes, but improvements have been agreed with the Clerk. The Council reclaimed VAT from HMRC for year 2024/25, in July 2025.
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes				The Risk Assessment is reviewed and agreed by Councillors in April/May each year. RFO advised that adding another signatory to bank mandate and scanning of older paper records was not actioned in 2025/26.
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 is monitored throughout the year and reported to Council in November when draft budget was considered. Based on RFO report the Council approved its budget in December 2024 with a £-2535 deficit and no increase to precept for financial year 2025/26.
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. VAT was accounted for and reclaimed. Refer to variances document for explanations.

* 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**	
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			N/A		RFO advised that there was no use of petty cash for financial year 2025/26.
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 2025/26.
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	Yes				The Asset Register is up to date to 31st March 2026 and was accepted by Council in April 2026

	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				RFO advised there is an outstanding payment of £8211.50. (50% of £16423) will be paid when construction of skateboard ramp is complete. Reconciled bank balances are reported to council each month and minuted. A reconciled balance sheet is sent to councillors each quarter and year-end. RFO advised that a councillor, not directly involved in the council's finances signs off the quarterly and end-of-year reconciliation, see documents supplied.
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 explained that WCC has not signed a lease with Vale Council for the Sports Pavilion, but are hopeful this will happen in 2026. Councillors understand

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

					that signing the lease will lead to additional costs/risk and it may be necessary to recruit a part-time caretaker or building manager. The Risk Assessment identifies these risks
13. Insurance		No			The Auditor General's Report - Link , advised that insurance cover is insufficient. The Clerk will take appropriate action where required

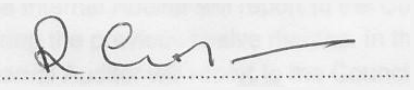
* If the response is 'no', please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

** 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 2025-25 and 2026-26. 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: 30th April 2026

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers