

## Audit Explainer 2022-23

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### 1.0 Background

The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities was issued by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2014. It sets out ways in which town and parish councils can present more information to its residents to help them understand how their council is working and increase its democratic accountability. The code comes from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

### 2.0 What this means

Every year, the parish council goes through a process of having its accountancy records and working methods independently audited. This is a two part process. Firstly, the council appoints an internal auditor (paid for by the council but acting independently) who will examine its bookkeeping and governance (the council's own rules and regulations). If this is satisfactory, councillors will be asked to approve the report at its public meeting in May. Once signed off, the second part of the audit takes place. The report is sent to an external auditor who will check through the summary of accounts, and note any issues that the internal auditor may have highlighted. During this period, any resident of Menheniot has the right to make their own examination of the records: this right is advertised on the parish council's website, social media and public noticeboard. If the second audit is satisfactory, then an External Auditor Certificate is issued. If there are any causes for concern identified by the external auditor, they will be noted on the certificate, and the council will be expected to take remedial action.

Although the time within which you have a legal right to examine the council's accounts is limited by law, you can ask questions about the way that money is spent at any time. Contact the Clerk's Office by email with any questions you might have.

The council publishes a copy of its annual return on its website – these are the main pages which contain information you may wish to examine.

#### **Page 3      Annual Internal Audit Report**

This is the list used by the internal auditor to mark off the items they have checked in the council's records.

#### **Page 4      Annual Governance Statement**

This confirms a vote that councillors made stating that they have correct procedures in place for managing and monitoring council business. It is signed by the Chair and Clerk.

#### **Page 5      Accounting Statement 2022/23**

Sets out a summary of income and expenses for the past year. The internal auditor will have checked paper and computer records to verify the numbers. It is signed by the Chair and Clerk. You can also see a full list on the website of all expenditure made by the council.

### **Internal Audit Report**

The auditor has written a short narrative to highlight any issues that need to be brought to the council's attention. No issues were raised in this audit.

### **Item 1 All Expenditure**

You can view our cash book which shows what payments we have made throughout the year. Expenses are divided into 10 categories. We do this so that we can keep track of what our expenses are, and how we are performing against the budget we have set. Your councillors receive a regular summary of this information. The regulations state that we should publish all expenses that are above £100. However, in order to be completely transparent, this parish council publishes every item, and has done since 2016.

### **Item 2 Councillors' Portfolios**

Your councillors are elected every four years by ballot of eligible residents in the parish. Every year, at its annual meeting, the councillors will elect a chair, vice-chair and volunteers to take responsibility for specific areas of council work. This list shows who has taken responsibility for what. If you need to contact a councillor personally, you can obtain their email address from the council's website or via the Clerk's Office.

### **Asset Register**

The council owns land in the parish at the recreation ground at East Road; the village green in Menheniot centre; the Community Garden on Trelawny Road; the amenity area at Merrymeet; the bus shelter in Menheniot; public toilets on East Road. The council has a responsibility to insure, maintain and repair these assets.

### **Minutes, agendas of formal meetings**

The parish council meets on the third Thursday of every month at The Old School at Menheniot. You can see a full list of the dates on this website. The agenda for monthly council meetings is published at least four days before the meeting takes place, and the Clerk aims to post the minutes of its meetings within 10 working days of the meeting itself. You can always find this information on the website or on the public noticeboards across the parish.

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