

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE &
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (EXEMPT AUTHORITY) ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 25, 26 and 27

Smaller authority name: **Lopen Parish Council**

(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below

(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts

(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and exactly 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below

(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.

(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority

1. Date of announcement 30 June 2025 (a)

2. Each year the smaller authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The AGAR has been published with this notice. It will not be reviewed by the appointed auditor, since the smaller authority has certified itself as exempt from the appointed auditor's review.

Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the AGAR, the accounting records for the financial year to which it relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2025, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

(b), L Wilson, Clerk & RFO, lopenpc.clerk@gmail.com;

commencing on (c) **Tuesday 1 July 2025**
and ending on (d) **Monday 11 August 2025**

3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is only subject to review by the appointed auditor if questions or objections raised under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 lead to the involvement of the auditor. The appointed auditor is:

PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)
15 Westferry Circus
Canary Wharf
London E14 4HD
sba@pkf-l.com

5. This announcement is made by (e)
L Wilson, Clerk & RFO

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2024/25 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 2025, 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 2025 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2025** notifying the external auditor.

LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL

certifies that during the financial year 2024/25, 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 2024/25:

10,052.67

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2024/25:

10,969.18

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 **£210 +VAT** will be payable.

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

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2021
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2023/24), 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 the above statements apply and 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 2025.

Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer

[Signature]

Date

30/06/2025

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

30/06/2025

Signed by Chair

[Signature]

Date

30/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

274/25

Generic email address of Authority

Telephone number

07587 211150

*Published web address

www.lopenvillage.org

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 2025. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 + VAT.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Lopen Parish Council

<https://www.lopenvillage.org/parish-council>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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.			N/A
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 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 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 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 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 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			N/A

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

28/02/2025

25/06/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Philip John Smith

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

25/06/2025

*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).

Lopen Parish Council - Internal Audit Review June 2025

Internal Control		Suggested Test	Yes	No	Comments
Proper Bookkeeping					
		Is the Cashbook maintained & up to date	X		
		Is the Cashbook arithmetically correct	X		
		Is the Cashbook regularly balanced	X		Reconciliation with bank statement regularly completed and signed off
Standing Orders & Financial Regulations adopted & applied					
		Has the Council formally adopted standing orders & financial regulations	X		Adopted NALC Model 2022 July & F Regs August 2023
		Has a Responsible Officer been appointed with specified duties	X		Clerk is RFO as per contract of employment
Payment controls					
		Have items or services above a set amount been competitively purchased	N/A		No high value items or services purchased
		Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised & minuted	X		
		Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded & reclaimed	X		Annually
		Is S137 expenditure separately recorded & within statutory limits	N/A		None undertaken in last 12 months
Risk Management					
		Does a review of minutes identify any unusual financial activity		X	
		Do the minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment for all appropriate activities and locations	X		
		Is insurance cover appropriate & adequate	X		
		Are internal financial controls documented & regularly reviewed	X		Financial Regulations Review and re-adopted August 2023 based on NALC Model Doc 2019
Budgetary Controls					
		Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept	X		
		Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the Council	X		
		Are there any significant unexplained variances from the budget		X	
Income Controls					
		Is income properly recorded & promptly banked	X		
		Does the precept recorded in the cashbook agree to the Council Tax authority's notification	X		
		Are security controls over cash adequate & effective	N/A		

Internal Control	Suggested Test	Yes	No	Comments
Petty Cash Procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded & supported by VAT invoices or receipts	N/A		
	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting	N/A		
	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly	N/A		
Payroll Controls	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by Council	X		
	Are other payments to the Clerk reasonable & approved by the Council	X		
	Has PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the Council as an employer	X		
	Has Auto Enrolment been complete as required	X		Exempt
Asset Controls	Does the Council keep an asset register of all material assets owned	X		
	Are the asset & investment registers up to date	X		
	Do asset insurance valuations agreed with those in the asset register	X		
Bank Reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account	X		
	Is the bank reconciliation carried out regularly on receipt of statements	X		Quarterly - See note under Proper Bookkeeping
	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation		X	
	Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation	N/A		
Year End Procedures	Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis - Receipts/Payments or Income & Expenditure			
	Do accounts agree with the cash book			
	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts			
	Where appropriate have debtors & creditors been properly recorded	N/A		

Based on my checks, carried out and reported as above, in my opinion the Council's accounts for the Financial Year 31st March 2025 have been well managed and present a fair and accurate picture of the Parish Council's activities.

Confirmed 25/06/2025



Philip J Smith ACIB Cert ITCM
Appointed Internal Auditor for Lopen Parish Council

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

LOPEN 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 2025, 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
			✓

*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:

30/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

272/25

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

Chair

Li He

Clerk

DM

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
	✓	

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	24,436	24,648	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	7,265	9,568	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,300	485	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	4,714	6,077	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	0.00	0.00	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	3,639	5,892	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	24,648	23,731	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	24,648	23,731	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.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	7,073	7,073	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	NIL	NIL	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 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

LBWA

Date

24/06/2024

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

30/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

273/25

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

line

Lopen Parish Council

Prepared by: LISA WILSON, Clerk + APD
(Name and Role (Clerk/FP-C etc))

Date: 24/6/25

Approved by: [Signature]
(Name and Role (FP-C/Clerk or Finance etc))

Date: 30/6/25

Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2024		24,647.95
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025		10,052.67
			34,700.62
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025		10,969.18
A	Cash in Hand 31/03/2025 (per Cash Book)		23,731.44
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/03/2025	0.00	
	Current 31/03/2025	5,530.09	
	Money Manager Account 31/03/2025	18,201.35	
	Other 31/03/2025	0.00	
			23,731.44
	Less: unpresented payments		
			23,731.44
	Plus unpresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		23,731.44
A = B Checks out OK			

Lopen Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
All Cost Centres and Codes

24 June 2025 (2024 - 2025)

Receipts

Code	Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
		Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
1	Precept		9,568.00	9,568.00				9,568.00 (N/A)
2	Grants/Donations		210.00	210.00				210.00 (N/A)
3	Bank Interest		274.67	274.67				274.67 (N/A)
4	VAT Refund							(N/A)
5	Other Income							(N/A)
SUB TOTAL			10,052.67	10,052.67				10,052.67 (N/A)

Payments

Code	Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
		Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
6	Staff Costs					5,077.03	5,077.03	-5,077.03 (N/A)
7	Staff Expenses & Training					95.00	-95.00	-95.00 (N/A)
8	Subscriptions & Memberships					90.65	-90.65	-90.65 (N/A)
9	Insurance					292.12	292.12	-292.12 (N/A)
10	Utilities							(N/A)
11	Communications (Phone, Web)							(N/A)
12	Admin (Stationery, Printer, Post)					84.29	-84.29	-84.29 (N/A)
13	Audit & Professional Fees					2,925.00	-2,925.00	-2,925.00 (N/A)
14	Elections							(N/A)
15	S 137							(N/A)
16	Loan Repayment							(N/A)
17	Open Spaces					1,205.34	-1,205.34	-1,205.34 (N/A)
18	Reserves 1							(N/A)
19	Reserves 2							(N/A)
20	Other/Miscellaneous					1,151.04	-1,151.04	-1,151.04 (N/A)
SUB TOTAL						10,920.47	-10,920.47	-10,920.47 (N/A)

Summary

NET TOTAL	10,052.67	10,052.67	10,920.47	-10,920.47	867.80 (N/A)
V.A.T.			48.71		
GROSS TOTAL	10,052.67		10,969.18		

Lopen Parish Council
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
Opening Balance		
Balance at Bank	24,647.95	
Cash in Hand		
Precept	9,568.00	
Grants/Donations	210.00	
Bank Interest	274.67	
VAT Refund		
Other Income		
Staff Costs		5,077.03
Staff Expenses & Training		95.00
Subscriptions & Memberships		90.65
Insurance		292.12
Utilities		
Communications (Phone, Website, Broac		
Admin (Stationery, Printer, Postage etc.)		84.29
Audit & Professional Fees		2,925.00
Elections		
S.137		
Loan Repayment		
Open Spaces		1,205.34
Reserves 1		
Reserves 2		
Other/Miscellaneous		1,151.04
VAT		48.71
	10,052.67	10,969.18
Closing Balances:		
Balances in Bank Account		23,731.44
Cash in Hand		
TOTAL	34,700.62	34,700.62

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2025

Signed


 Responsible Financial Officer

Date

24/6/25