

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

HADSTOCK 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
	☐	☐	☒

***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:

29/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

25/05/18b

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

Chair

Clerk

[Handwritten signatures]

<https://www.hadstock.org.uk/>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

HADSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	7,583	14,775	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	12,040	14,312	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	8,607	24,859	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	5,433	5,695	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	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	8,021	28,334	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	14,775	19,917	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	14,775	19,917	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	44,355	42,880	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	0	0	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



Date

13/05/2025

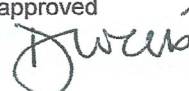
I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

29/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

25/05/18c

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



Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

HADSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

www.hadstock.org.uk

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.			✓

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

28/05/2025

JANINE McLAUGHLIN

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Janie McLaughlin

Date

28/05/2025

*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).

Bank reconciliation – pro forma

This reconciliation should include all bank and building society accounts, including short term investment accounts. It must agree to the column headed "Year ending 31 March 20xx" 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.

Name of smaller authority: **HADSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL**

County area (local councils and parish meetings only): **ESSEX**

Financial year ending 31 March 2025

Prepared by (Name and Role): **MS S BECKETT CLERK /RFO**

Date: **31/03/2025**

	£	£
Balance per bank statements as at 31/3/2025:		
BARCLAYS BANK	20,556.7	
		20,556.7
Petty cash float (if applicable)		-
Less: any unpresented cheques as at 31/3/2025		
101553	(50.00)	
101552	(50.00)	
101551	(240.00)	
101550	(227.40)	
101549		
101548	(39.94)	
101547	(16.58)	
101505	(15.00)	
		(638.92)
Add: any un-banked cash as at 31/3/xx		
Net balances as at 31/3/2025 (Box 8)		19,917.75

EXPLANATION OF VARIANCES 2024/25 INCOME/RECEIPTS

	2025	24859.82	2024	8607.03	VARIENCE 16252.79
COST CODE		INCREASE		DECREASE	
TRAINING FEES				-450	
GRANT FUNDING		16854.09			
GRASS CUTTING CHURCH		40			
VAT				-218.3	
		16894.09		-668.3	16225.79

EXPLANATION OF VARIANCES 2024/25 PAYMENTS

	2025	28334.56	2024	8021.38	VARIENCE 20313.18
COST CENTRE		INCREASE		DECREASE	
ADMINISTRATION		552.24			
LENS PATH				-95	
COMMUNITY		1776.76			
COUNCILLOR TRAINING		80			
GRASS CUTTING		178.08			
PLAY EQUIPMENT		10894.22			
PARISH LAND				-628.69	
SALARY				-132.23	
SUSTAINABLE HADSTOCK		5060.24			
VAT		2627.56			
		21169.1		-855.92	20313.18

Hadstock Parish Council
ANNUAL RETURN - Section 2 : Statement of Accounts

Explanation of variances

This is prepared based on information in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils : a Practitioner's Guide"

Important note: These figures have been prepared on a RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS basis.

Box No.	Description	31/03/2024 £	31/03/2025 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Notes
1	Balances brought fwd	7583.08	14775.57				BALANCE B/F AGREES
2	Annual precept	12040.00	14312.00	2272.00	19%	Yes	EVIDENCED INCREASE
3	Total other receipts	8607.03	24859.82	16252.79	189%	Yes	GRANT FUNDING
4	Staff Costs	5433.16	5695.08	261.92	5%	No	INCREASE AS PER NALC AND BACK DATED PAY
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	No	
6	Total other payments	8021.38	28334.56	20313.18	253%	Yes	PAYMENTS INCREASED VIA SUSTAINABLE HADSTOCK
7	Balances carried forward	14775.57	19917.75	5142.18	35%	Yes	RESERVES HELD FROM SUSTAINABLE HADSTOCK
8	Total Cash and Short Term Investments	14775.57	19917.75	5142.18	35%	Yes	RESERVES HELD FROM SUSTAINABLE HADSTOCK
9	Total Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments	44355.00	42880.00	-1475.00	3%	No	PURCHASE OF NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT AND BALANCE OR DISPOSED
10	Total Borrowings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	No	

This report is intended as a guide to the variances you may need to explain. The specific requirements vary between external auditors so please check the requirements shown on the pro forma provided to your council

Please note a breakdown of approved reserves will also be required if the total reserves (Box 7) figure is more than twice the annual precept value (Box 2)

Smaller authority name:

HADSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE	NOTES
1. Date of announcement 29 MAY 2025 (a) 2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit 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) MS S BECKETT CILCA PROPER OFFICER [CLERK] RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER [RFO] hadstockparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk commencing on (c) WEDNESDAY 11 June 2025 and ending on (d) TUESDAY 22 July 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 subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. 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 MS A BECKETT [RFO] (e)	(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 at least 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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

HADSTOCK 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 2025; 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 2024/25

(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 2024/25

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 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY