Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Accounting statement 2025-26 for:

Name of body: Blackwood Town 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	165,548	143,911	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	80,766	92,593	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	3,903	10,235	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	21,751	33,437	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	84,555	126,328	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	143,911	86,974	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances0			
8. (+) Debtors	1,448	12,328	**Income and expenditure accounts only:** Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	145,105	76,637	**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	2,642	1,991	**Income and expenditure accounts only:** Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	143,911	86,974	**Total balances should equal line 7 above:** Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	64,940	86,713	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.		No * please see notes	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 [insert name of website].	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.	NO	Please see notes	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

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 2025-26 was £11.10 per elector.

   In 2025-26, the Council made payments totalling £___1,371.55_____ under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

2. Item 1 Vision and Purpose

Please see notes

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 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	Approval by the Council
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.	I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference: **Minute ref:** 29.6.2026, item 4.
RFO signature: MyBetts	**Chair signature:**
Name: Mandy Betts	**Name:** Councillor George Etheridge

Date: 29th June 2026	**Date:** 29th June 2026

Annual Internal Audit – Blackwood Town Council

-Year Ended 31st.March 2026

No.	Action	Description of Audit work carried out
1	Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year	Verified that Manual systems accurately recorded all transactions and that summary account was accurately produced from same.
2	Financial Regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for	Verified that other than a small number payments were approved at the Council meeting and all payments were supported by invoices/vouchers. As part of the Audit I identified that there was a small discrepancy on the Mayors Charity Account when in effect £6 too much was paid over to Ty Hafan. I would recommend for completeness Council retrospectively agree the additional payment. (Would propose in future payments by Card are identified as such as part of Schedule of Payments presented to Members)
3	The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	Auditor recognised the Clerk had presented a risk assessment report to the Council.
4	The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored and reserves were appropriate	The Council assessed its spending plans for the forthcoming year,(including additional provision for potential additional staffing requirements & office costs) calculated the precept accordingly – resulting in a £2.50 per annum increase for Band D properties to £30 per annum A Medium Term Budget strategy was also presented and agreed. A written budget monitoring report was presented periodically throughout the year. Whilst Reserves / Balances were significant totalling approx £144k members recognised some £95k was earmarked and allocated £20,110 of the remaining available Reserves to support the budget
5	Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked and VAT was appropriately accounted for	The County Borough Council was notified of the Community Council's precept. The precept was received by bank credit in two instalments. Verified that all miscellaneous receipts were banked promptly and that VAT has been appropriately accounted for

6	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for	An initial Petty cash float of £50 has subsequently been increased to £100 on 8th. December 2025 (Policy & Finance C'ttee) agreed by Council 12th. January 2026 for office sundries and is held by the Clerk, with all minor sundry expenses receipted and properly accounted for
7	Salaries to employees were paid in accordance with minuted approvals and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied	All salary payments are dealt with by Playworks, who also deal with all Tax and National Insurance deductions. Checked against Accounts and agreed same. Pension contributions paid by staff are at present being dealt with manually whilst discussions are ongoing with Playworks. Checked that salary payments were in accordance with agreed rates, albeit identified need for retrospective report to members re.change of hours for Clerk / Deputy
8	Asset and investment registers were completed accurate and properly maintained	Verified that the asset register was correct by checking spend in Accounts and noted adjustments due to disposal etc.
9	Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out	Verified that interim and year-end bank reconciliations were carried out correctly and reported to Council
10	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis, agreed with the cashbook, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded	Verified that written periodical reports to members were based on correct accounting basis, agreed with cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail and with debtors and creditors properly recorded
11	Trust funds – the Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/A

Risk Areas identified by Council

12. Misappropriation of Funds

The Council has again reviewed the adequacy of Internal Controls in place and considered them adequate & proportionate, and would greatly negate that risk

13. Events

The Council has assessed the risks of all its agreed activities. Appropriate & proportionate risk management procedures are in place, with when appropriate, risk mitigation plans.

Also adequate insurance cover in place and risk assessments for events as necessary

Date 12th June 2025 Signature

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 **Blackwood Town 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:

Annual Governance Statement – negative responses

I draw attention to the negative responses provided by the Council in its Annual Governance Statement and the additional notes provided by the Council

The Annual Governance Statement sets out the minimum standards of good governance expected of the Council.

We recommend that the Council addresses these issues in order to ensure that it can provide positive responses in future years.

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

Deryck Evans

Deryck Evans, Audit Manager, Audit Wales
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

Date: 03/11/2026

Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body: | **Blackwood Town 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.

	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				
2. Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes				
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes				
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				
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes				
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes				
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				
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	Yes				

* 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				
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				
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. MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUND	Yes				THE COUNCIL HAS AGAIN REVIEWED THE ADEQUACY OF INTERNAL CONTROLS IN PLACE AND CONSIDERED THEM ADEQUATE & PROPORTIONATE & WOULD CURRENTLY INDICATE RISK
13. EVENTS	Yes				THE COUNCIL HAS ASSESSED THE RISKS OF ITS AGREED EVENTS/ACTIVITIES. APPROPRIATE & PROPORTIONATE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE WITH WHEN APPROPRIATE RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS
14.					ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVER IS IN PLACE & RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR EVENTS AS NECESSARY

* 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 12/6/26.] * 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.

* PLEASE REFER TO NOTE 7 (GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RE PERSON BEING INDEPENDENT OF FINANCIAL CONTROLS & PROCEDURES)

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: John Hold

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:

Date: 12/6/26

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers