

Community and Town Councils in Wales

Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Accounting statements 2023-24 for:

Name of body:

Cwmaman Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 (£)	31 March 2024 (£)	
Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments			
1. Balances brought forward	303,789	157,161	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	337,931	369,116	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	111,874	265,895	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	335,271	293,829	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	4,458	4,457	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).
6. (-) Total other payments	256,703	360,882.56	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	157,162	133,003.44	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances			
8. (+) Debtors	45,912	105,394	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	120,539	53,005	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	9,290	25,395.56	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	157,161	133,003.44	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	662,917	662,917	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.
13. Total borrowing	12,893	8,685.29	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, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed?		'YES' means that the Council:	PG Ref
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for: - effective financial management during the year; and - the preparation and approval of the accounting statements.	Yes		Properly sets its budget and manages its money and prepares and approves its accounting statements as prescribed by law.	6, 12
2. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes		Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	6, 7
3. We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances.	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 has done so.	6
4. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of 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.	6, 23
5. We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes		Considered the financial and other risks it faces in the operation of the body and has dealt with them properly.	6, 9
6. We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems throughout the year and have received a report from the internal auditor.	Yes		Arranged 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.	6, 8
7. We have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Council and, where appropriate, have included them on the accounting statements.	Yes		Disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.	6
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 issues/weaknesses brought to its attention by both the internal and external auditors.	6, 8, 23
9. 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	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.	3, 6
		N/A		

* Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'no' response given; and describe what action is being taken to address the weaknesses identified.

Additional disclosure notes*

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 and S2 Local Government Act 2000

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 2023-24 was £9.93 per elector.

In 2023-24, the Council made payments totalling £7,069 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

2. During January 2023 the precept was presented by the former Clerk at a meeting held on January 30th his last day was 31st January. I was asked to fill in the amount to submit to County. The form had already been signed at the meeting by Clerk and Mayor with no value entered. The amount submitted was £9000 over the agreed precept. The figure was the budget needed not the precept amount. This came to light when the Council Tax bills were sent out to the Community. One of our Councillors questions this and this is when we found the error. We contacted County and nothing could be done at this stage to correct the Council Tax bill. I took this to Council and discussed with them what had happened. They agreed to give this amount back in next tax year by reducing the precept by the amount of £9000.

The press released the error and statements went out to the community from the Council to explain the situation. Please find statements attached.

Please find announcements that went out 2024 regarding the correction to the error also attached.

Internal control process was put into place to address the 2024/2025 precept submission. The figure was agreed in January.

Full Council meeting had amount read out the submission form was completed in front of Council and signed on the same night.

3.

* 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.

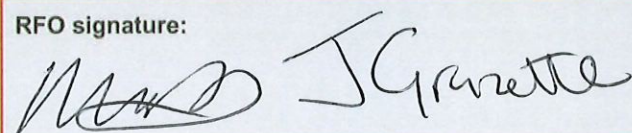
Council approval and certification

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 2024.

RFO signature:



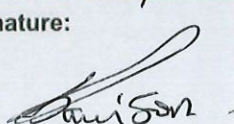
Name: Laura Dent JAYNE GRAZETTE

Approval by the Council

I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference:

Minute ref: 2024/3

Chair signature:



Name: L. DAVISON

Date:

17/6/2024

Date:

17/6/2024

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 2024 of **Cwmaman 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: Qualified

Except for the matters reported below in my Basis for Qualification, 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.

Basis of Qualification

Accounting Statement

In my opinion, the Accounting Statement does not fairly present the Council's income and expenditure and financial position:

- The Council prepares accounts on the I&E basis, as such the accounts should be prepared net of VAT and the Council should not be recognising VAT income within its total other receipts. However, the Council has recognised VAT as income within total other receipts.

Annual Governance Statement

In my opinion, the Annual Governance Statement is not consistent with the Council's internal controls and governance arrangements for the year:

- Assertion 3: The Council has not provided evidence that a budget has been set in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and that the precept has been set in line with the budget. The Act requires the Council to consider its level of reserves, estimated expenditure and estimated income when setting its budget requirement. The Council must set their budget in accordance with the relevant regulations and codes of practice.
- The Council's minutes do not include a record of payments approved for processing. As a result, we were unable to confirm whether the specific payments tested were formally approved.

The Council must attach a detailed schedule of approved payments and receipts to the minutes, along with any other supporting documentation referenced, to ensure transparency and compliance with governance requirements.

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.

Matters drawn to our attention during the audit

During the audit, matters related to the Council's administration and additional sums paid to its former clerk were drawn to our attention. These included payments for 'surveyor fees' for specific pieces of work undertaken by the former clerk over a period of several years and included full reimbursement of professional indemnity fees for the former clerk's private surveyor practice. We noted that these payments had been presented to the Council for approval.

However, it was unclear whether the services provided had been approved by the Council before charges were made and whether or not the 'services' should, in fact, have been part of the former clerk's core duties. Furthermore, there was no evidence that the Council had followed proper procurement procedures for these services. It appears that the services were simply provided and charged by the former clerk without prior approval.

We recommend that the Council carefully scrutinises all payments made to officers to ensure that the payments relate to salary and properly approved reimbursement of expenses incurred. Where any payments are made for additional services, we recommend that the Council ensures that these services were properly procured and approved before any work is undertaken.

Reconciliation of accounts to ledger

We were unable to reconcile the initial cashbook to the accounts.

The Council subsequently provided an updated ledger, which allowed us to reconcile the accounts after adjusting for a £21,000 variance relating to "Total other payments" and "Creditors". On the ledger, these figures were reported as £339,861 and £4,373 respectively. After accounting for the £21,000 adjustment, both lines reconciled to the amounts disclosed in the annual return.

We recommend that the Council ensure that the cashbook or ledger provided for audit purposes is fully reconciled to the accounts before submission.

Council did not record the agreed precept for the 2023-24 financial year within their minutes

Before setting its precept, the Council must calculate its budget requirement in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The precept set must be the calculated budget requirement i.e. a specific sum of money.

The Council's minutes recorded only the percentage increase in the precept and did not specify the absolute value of the precept.

We recommend that future minutes clearly state the full precept figure alongside any percentage change to ensure transparency and clarity for stakeholders.

Supporting documentation for income transactions tested

Each year we send the Council an audit notice that sets out the information we need to complete the audit. Failure to provide this information may lead to a qualified audit opinion and potentially an increased audit fee.

For income transactions tested, no supporting documentation was provided.

We recommend that the Council reviews the annual audit notice to ensure that all required information is provided on a timely basis.

Publication of information

Section 50 of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013 requires the Council to publish its audited accounts online. Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 requires the Council to publish the Annual Governance Statement alongside the accounts. Regulation 15 of the 2014 Regulations requires the Council to publish along with the accounts, any certificate, opinion, or report issued, given or made by the Auditor General.

The Council has not yet published the 2022-23 and prior years accounts and audit opinion.

We recommend that the Council reviews its publication arrangements to ensure that all relevant documents are published as soon as practicable.

Discrepancy between IRPW return and cashbook

There was a discrepancy between the IRPW return and cashbook which we were unable to reconcile.

We recommend that the IRPW return is consistent with the cashbook.

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

 Richard Harries, Director, Audit Wales For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales	Date: 05/11/2025
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Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body: **Cwmaman 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 2024.

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.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
2. Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
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.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			x		Please see Internal Audit Report
7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with minuted approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report

	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.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
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.	x				Please see Internal Audit Report
11. Trust funds (including charitable trusts). The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.			x		Please see Internal Audit Report

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. Tenders & Quotes	x				Please see internal audit report
13.					
14.					

* 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 15.06.2024.] * 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 2022-23 and 2023-24. I also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest surrounding my appointment.

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: KL Grabham
Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: KL Grabham
Date: 15.06.2024