RE: Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council - review of AGAR section 3

clerk@bishopslydeardparishcouncil.gov.uk | WED APR 22 13:51 | 10 minute(s) read

Dear Mr Maskell,

Please find the following response to the questions raised:

- Detailed Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 – Confirmation that all the recommendations on page 5 of the attached report have been implemented during the 2025/26 period?

  Please see the attached Internal Audit action tracker. Please note these actions are reviewed along with other actions at the monthly Parish Council meetings. This shows that all Internal Audit actions have been completed, the actions taken and the date completed except for item E.1: (Library lease: A formal lease should be drawn up between the Council and the owner of the library premises.). The building owner died and the estate is in probate. However, the solicitor has sent an example lease agreement for approval when probate has been concluded. We can then close this action.

- Box 4 explanation – The overpayment of £1,996 referenced in the email below, what did this relate to?

The £1,996 total was for two payments as follows:

1. Payment of £1,041.94 to HMRC for missing tax and NI payments from 05/06/2023 to 05/01/2025 – see attached letter dated 11th December 2024.
2. Payment of £954.19 to Moorcroft Debt Recovery on behalf of HMRC – see attached letter dated 14th January 2025. This was paid immediately

NOTE: These payments were disputed and HMRC subsequently refunded the council.

- Additionally, could you provide the hourly rates to enable us to substantiate the variance increase in the year?

  The role is SCP 23 and the hourly rate was £17.29 – see attached NALC pay agreement 2024-25 document.

- Box 9 comparative – The comparative figure for Box 9 in the current year AGAR is £101,015, however the Box 9 figure in the prior year AGAR is £96,407. Please could you explain this difference?

I noticed an error in the spreadsheet used to calculate the total Asset Register value. This became apparent when I entered the data into Scribe accounts. I have attached the original Excel spreadsheet that shows the total as £96,407– see attached. You can see that some numbers were entered as 'text' and not 'numbers' (e.g. rows 10, 24, 52, 67, 68). These values are not then added into the total. I have attached the corrected asset register which shows the total as £101,015.

I was not aware that you can't simply restate a former year's asset total if it was incorrectly calculated. We will follow the correct process and restate the previous year as you explained. I have attached a scanned copy of the marked up previous year AGAR Accounting Statement initialed by the chair and clerk/RFO as requested.

I hope these explanations are satisfactory. Please let me know if you need anything else. Aplogies for not following the correct process regarding the change in asset register value due to spreadsheet errors and not restating it properly in the prior year.

Kind regards

David Richards

Clerk/ RFO
Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council
Phone: 07774 541060

From: Chris Maskell <cmaskell@pkf-l.com>
To: "Parish Clerk"<clerk@bishopslydeardparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Cc: "SBA"<SBA@pkf-l.com>
Date: Mon, 20 Apr 2026 15:35:08 +0100
Subject: RE: Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council - review of AGAR section 3

Good Afternoon

In reference to the point regarding the Box 9 comparative, I have now established via information contained on the Council's meeting the breakdown of the difference between the current year and prior year AGAR's figure.

However, there is a set process which is required to amend figures on the AGAR form as noted below to make the users of the AGAR fully aware of any changes that occur for both the current year and prior year figures.

Changes to AGAR form

The process for amending AGAR forms is as follows:

- You must use the original form that was submitted to us (or a copy of the original form) to make the amendments, as it needs to be clear that there have been amendments and what they were.
- The incorrect figure should be crossed out with one line and the correct figure written next to it.
- The clerk/RFO and the chair should initial each amendment.
- The amended AGAR form should then be returned to us.
- After which, the amended AGAR should be published on the Council's website.

To resolve the issue, there are two possible options:

1. The Council can follow the process set out above
2. The alternative course of action, is for us to raise an except for matter in relation to the restatement of the Box 9 figure

Please could you inform me of the Council's preferred option to assist with the finalisation of the file.

If require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Chris Maskell
Manager
Not for Profit
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For and on behalf of

PKF

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From: Chris Maskell
Sent: 16 April 2026 15:23
To: Parish Clerk <clerk@bishopslydeardparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Cc: SBA <SBA@pkf-l.com>
Subject: RE: Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council - review of AGAR section 3

Good Afternoon

I hope you are well.

We are currently in the process of finalising the review of the AGAR form.

In addition to reviewing the AGAR, we have also been dealing with challenge correspondence received in conjunction with finalising the AGAR submission.

Please can you clarify the following information:

- Detailed Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 – Confirmation that all the recommendations on page 5 of the attached report have been implemented during the 2025/26 period?
- Box 4 explanation – The overpayment of £1,996 referenced in the email below, what did this relate to? Additionally, could you provide the hourly rates to enable us to substantiate the variance increase in the year?
- Box 9 comparative – The comparative figure for Box 9 in the current year AGAR is £101,015, however the Box 9 figure in the prior year AGAR is £96,407. Please could you explain this difference?

If require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

From: Parish Clerk <clerk@bishopslydeardparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 August 2025 15:32
To: Vedika Pandey <vpandey@pkf-l.com>
Cc: SBA <SBA@pkf-l.com>
Subject: Re: Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council - review of AGAR section 3

WARNING!! - This message has originated from an external sender - clerk@bishopslydeardparishcouncil.gov.uk. Please check the validity of the sender and contents.

Dear Ms Pandey,

Regarding the pay increase.
The AGAR variance form stated the following:
Note 3.
The increase in staff cost was due to the following:
1 - A change in the contracted hours for the new clerk from 15 hours per week to 20 hours per week
2 - An increase in the hourly rate of pay for the Clerk/RFO in line with the national settlement
3 - Additional hours worked (290 hours) by the clerk in 2024/25
4 - There was no clerk for 3 months in 2023/24 (July, August and September), therefore, lower Staff Costs in that year

In detail this is as follows:
Point 1 – the new clerk (i.e. me) started on 23 September 2024 and was contracted for 20 hours per week. The previous clerk could not do the work in the contracted 15 hours per week, and the staffing committee approved the increase for the new clerk. Hence, this is equivalent to an **increase of £2,335**.
Point 2 – the national settlement was applied from the start of the financial year i.e. 01/04/2024. This is equivalent to an **increase of £577** over the year.
Point 3 – the additional 290 hours were worked during the financial year. This was an increase of **£5,014** over the year.
Point 4 – this is relevant as the staff costs for the previous year were lower than normal as there were 3 months of costs missing. This makes a **difference of £2,350** for the missing weeks.

Plus we paid HMRC an **overpayment of £1,996** which was refunded the next financial year. NOTE: The HMRC demands for this amount were disputed at the time but not resolved until the next financial year.

This all **total £12,272** . The variance on the form shows a difference of £12,260 compared to the previous year.

Regarding the Model Financial Regulations adopted by the Parish Council, the council reviewed the NALC version issued in April 2024 during the Parish Council meetings in May, June and July 2024. It was finally adopted during the August 2024 Parish Council meeting following the changes requested. This version was again reviewed during the Parish Council meeting in March 2025. NALC issued a further version during March 2025 and this was adopted by the council in the May 2025 Parish Council meeting. Hence, the Parish Council had up to date Financial Regulations in place during 2024/25. The internal auditor was just pointing out that the latest NALC version issued in March 2025 was in review and finally adopted in May 2025. In fact the most recent version only came out in March 2025 so couldn't have been adopted much earlier.

Kind Regards

David Richards
Clerk
Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council

37 Stawell Road,
Bishops Lydeard,
Taunton,
TA4 3FA
Phone: 07774 541060

---- On Fri, 15 Aug 2025 16:28:04 +0100 **Vedika Pandey <vpandey@pkf-l.com>** wrote ---

Dear Mr Richards,

Thank you for submitting your AGAR Form 3 and supporting documentation for our review. I am in the process of completing the file and had the following queries:

- Section 2, Box 4 Variance : Please may you confirm the numerical increase in the clerk's pay and from when this went into effect.

I would be grateful if you may respond to my query by Friday 22nd August, in order for us to complete work on the file.

This email is also to inform you that I will be raising the following 'except for' matter (qualifications) subject to sign off from an Engagement Lead :

- Section 1, Assertion 2 has been incorrectly completed. Information received in the internal auditor's detailed reports highlights that the authority did not adopt the most recent Financial Regulations in the 2024/25 financial year. Hence, on the basis of above, this should have been marked 'No'.

If you have any queries regarding this email, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards,

Vedika Pandey | SBA Team
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vpandey@pkf-l.com
02071891398

For and on behalf of

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