

**NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT
AND RIGHT TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL RETURN
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2026**

Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 Section 29

Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014

	1. The audit of accounts for the Merlin's Bridge Community Council for the year ended 31 March 2026 has been concluded. 2. The annual return is available for inspection by any local government elector for the area of the Merlin's Bridge Community Council on application to:
(a) Insert name, position and address of person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the annual return	(a) Peter Horton (Clerk), Greenland, Clarbeston Road, Pembrokeshire SA63 4QP
(b) Insert the times between which a local government elector may apply to inspect the annual return	Between 9am and 5pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), when any local government elector may make copies of the annual return.
(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs	3. Copies will be provided to any local government elector on payment of (c) £ - for each copy of the annual return.
(d) Insert name and position of person placing the notice	(d) PETER HORTON (CLERK TO THE COUNCIL)
(e) Insert date of placing of the notice	(e) 13th October 2026

Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Accounting statement 2025-26 for:

Name of body: **MERLIN'S BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 (£)	31 March 2026 (£)	
Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments			
1. Balances brought forward	12797	13349	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	17500	17500	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	250	497	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	4714	5688	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	12484	7842	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	13349	17816	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances			
8. (+) Debtors	0	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	13349	17816	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	0	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	13349	17816	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	6883	6883	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.	✓		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.	✓		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]. <i>www.merlinsbridgecommunitycouncil.gov.uk</i>	✓		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.	✓		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.	✓		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.	✓		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.	✓		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.	✓		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.	✓		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	✓		Meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the general Power of	E

THE COUNCIL DOES NOT MEET THE CRITERIA

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

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 £2700-00 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

2.

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
X

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

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.

RFO signature:



Name:

PETER NORTON

Date:

13/05/2026

Approval by the Council

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

Minute ref: MAY 2026/160/ANNUAL GOVERNANCE

Chair signa



Name: MICHAEL LEWIS

Date:

13/05/2026

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 **Merlin's Bridge Community 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:

Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

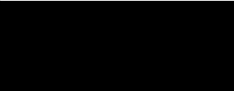
The Council's financial regulations and standing orders are not based on the One Voice Wales/NALC model. It is recommended that the Council updates their financial regulations and standing orders to ensure they cover the minimum legal requirements and reflect best practice.

Fidelity guarantee insurance

During the audit we reviewed the Council's fixed asset register and its insurance policy in place during 2025-26. We note that there are several assets included on the fixed asset register that are not specified in the Council's insurance policy.

We recommend that the Council reviews its insurance coverage to satisfy itself that it has appropriate levels of insurance cover in place.

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

 Deryck Evans, Audit Manager, Audit Wales For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales	Date: 09/10/2026
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