

# FENTON & TORKSEY LOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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## Explanation of negative responses to Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

### Introduction

During 2024/25 fiscal year Fenton & Torksey Lock Parish Council became inquorate. WLDC appointed Councillors to ensure the Council could continue to function.

New Councillors were eventually appointed from within the Parish; however they were new to the role and had no experience or knowledge of what was required of them in relation to the running of a Parish Council and the associated Financial, Internal controls and Transparency requirements. This situation was further exacerbated when the Clerk resigned in the December of 2024. It left the Council in a very vulnerable position, with limited guidance with regard to the requirements of the AGAR.

### Item 1:

Accounts were kept throughout the year however the Annual statement was not prepared and no exemption certificate was submitted. This was due to the inexperience of the Councillors.

The Council has now recruited a Clerk who has knowledge, and experience, of the processes and procedures in relation to the AGAR.

### Item 2:

Councillors struggled to get access to the bank account initially, so checks and balances could not be put in place.

The new Clerk now has access to the bank statements and has undertaken a full review of bank transactions. No fraud has been found and bank reconciliations have been completed.

### Item 3:

The Council were unaware of their requirements under Financial Regulations and the Transparency Code.

New Financial Regulations have been issued to all Councillors and adopted. All adopted policies and financial records will be posted in the Council website.

### Item 4:

No period for the exercise of public rights was put in place as the AGAR was not completed.

The AGAR has now been completed and will be posted on the Parish website and noticeboards. Parishioners will be informed of the issue with the 2024/25 AGAR via newsletters, Facebook and the Website, and will be invited to review the documents if they desire. All documents relating to the 2024/35 AGAR will be made available at the Annual Parish Meeting.

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## **Item 5:**

External Insurance was purchased however, once again, Councillors were unaware of what Internal Controls should have been in place and no risk assessment was carried out.

The New Clerk has carried out a full risk assessment and is addressing each area of risk with the Council. Copies of the Internal Controls Policy have also been circulated, and both will be posted on the Parish Website.

The Clerk will address the risks and ensure all are mitigated as much as possible.

## **Item 7:**

No audits took place in the 2024/25 fiscal year.

The New Clerk has undertaken an audit of the Council's policies and procedures and is putting in place any measures to mitigate deficiencies from the audit. The Clerk has recommended the Council use the LALC internal audit scheme going forward.

## **Item 8:**

No financial impacts were considered in the 2024/25 fiscal year. This was down to the lack of experience of Councillors and the loss of the Clerk.

The new Clerk will put in place regular reviews of commitments, liabilities and litigation that may have an impact on the Council and report any concerns.

The Council will be implementing a full range of appropriate policies and procedures through the coming months.

A full review of assets will take place prior to the 2025/26 AGAR.

A training programme will be put in place for Councillor and the Clerk.