

Local Councils in England

Annual return for the year ended 31 March 2010

Local councils in England with an annual turnover of £1 million or less must complete an annual return summarising their annual activities at the end of each financial year. In this annual return the term 'local council' means a Parish Meeting or a Parish Council or a Town Council.

The annual return on the following pages is made up of four sections:

- **Sections 1 and 2** are to be completed by the person nominated by the local council.
- **Section 3** will be completed by the external auditor.
- **Section 4** is to be completed by the local council internal audit provider.

Each local council must ensure this annual return is approved no later than 30 June 2010.

Completing your annual return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Please complete all sections highlighted in green. Do **not** leave any green box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns may require additional external audit work and incur additional costs.

Please send the annual return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2010, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to your appointed external auditor by the due date.

If required, your auditor will identify and ask for any documents needed for audit. Unless requested, please do **not** send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Audited and certified annual returns will be returned to the council for publication or public display of sections 1,2 and 3.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor or the Audit Commission directly for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return is available in the Practitioners' Guide for local councils that can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.slcc.co.uk

Section 1 – Accounting statements for

THORNTON LE DALE PARISH COUNCIL

Readers should note that throughout this annual return references to a 'local council' or 'council' also relate to a parish meeting.

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2009 £	31 March 2010 £	
1 Balances brought forward	17341	28875	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2 (+) Annual precept	19962	20760	Total amount of precept receivable or received in the year.
3 (+) Total other receipts	12988	11395	Total receipts or income as recorded in the cashbook less the precept received. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4 (-) Staff costs	4283	4138	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	—	—	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on borrowings (if any).
6 (-) Total other costs	17133	21634	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7 (=) Balances carried forward	28875	35258	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)
8 Total cash and short term investments	28875	35258	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – to agree with bank reconciliation.
9 Total fixed assets and long term assets	16032	13271	The recorded book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the council and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties and any long term investments.
10 Total borrowings	NONE	NONE	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11 Trust funds (including charitable) disclosure note	NO	NO	The council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing trust funds or assets. (Readers should note that the figures above do not include any trust transactions.)

I certify that the accounting statements 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 2010.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer

M. H. L.

Date 4/5/10

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the council and recorded as minute reference

4. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

Date 4/5/10

Signed by Chair of the meeting at which these accounting statements were approved.

C. C. L.

Date 4/5/10

Section 2 – Annual governance statement

We acknowledge as the members of **THORNTON LN DANK PARISH 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 2010, that:

	Agreed – Yes or No*	'Yes' means that the council:
1 We have approved the accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.	YES	prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.
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.
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 which 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.
4 We have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	YES	during the year has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the council's accounts.
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 and has dealt with them properly.
6 We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems and carried out a review of its effectiveness.	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 council and reviewed the impact of this work.
7 We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	YES	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8 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 in the accounting statements.	YES	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.
9 Trust funds (including charitable) – in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we have discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

This annual governance statement is approved by the local council and recorded as minute reference

7 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10 dated **4/5/10**

Signed on behalf of **THORNTON LN DANK PARISH COUNCIL**

Signed by: Chair  Date **4/5/10**

Signed by: Clerk  Date **4/5/10**

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

Section 3 – External auditor's certificate and opinion

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2010 of

THORNTON LN PARK PARISH COUNCIL

Respective responsibilities of the council and the auditor

The council is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The council is also responsible for preparing an annual return which:

- summarises the council accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2010; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to our audit responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission and, on the basis of our review of the annual return and supporting information, to report whether any matters that come to our attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

External auditor's report

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Section 2, Box 6: In accordance with the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended) the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal audit each year, as part of the wider annual review of the system of internal control - refer to the NALC/SLCC Practitioners Guide.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the council/meeting:

- A) The Council have been unable to provide a statement to confirm the post office investment of £104 included within Box 8.
- B) Please ensure that the Annual Return is accurately completed before submission for audit: incorrect figure in Section 1, Box 9 - should be £10,511.

External auditor's signature:

Mazars LLP

External auditor's name:

Mazars LLP, Southampton, SO15 2BE

Date:

11 AUGUST 2010

Note: The auditor signing this page has been appointed by the Audit Commission and is reporting to you that they have carried out and completed all the work that is required of them by law. For further information please refer to the Audit Commission's publication entitled *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Small Bodies*.

Section 4 – Annual internal audit report to

ENT **THORNTON** **LE** **OUN** **DALW** **PARISH** **COUNCIL**

The council's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2010.

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 alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the council.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose from one of the following Yes/No*/Not covered**
A Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	YES
B The council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
C The council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	YES
D The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	YES
E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	YES
G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	YES
H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	YES
I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	YES
J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	YES
K Trust funds (including charitable) The council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/A/NO/NA

For any other risk areas identified by the council (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

Name of person who carried out the internal audit **CHRISTINE ANNE BAXTER**

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit **Christine Baxter** Date **12/04/10**

***Note:** 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).

****Note:** 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 (add separate sheets if needed).

Guidance notes on completing the 2010 annual return

- 1 Please make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty green boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making any amendments to the completed return. But, if this is unavoidable, make sure the amendments are approved by the council, properly initialled and an explanation for them is provided to the auditor. Annual returns containing unapproved or unexplained amendments will be returned unaudited and may incur additional costs.
- 2 Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a council member or the Chair, to review your annual return for completeness before sending it off to the auditor.
- 3 Please do not send the auditor any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. You must, however, notify the auditor with details of any change of Clerk or Chair.
- 4 Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send to your auditor with the annual return covers **all** your bank accounts. If your council holds any short-term investments, please note their value on the bank reconciliation. The auditor should be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the Statement of Accounts. **You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8.** More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- 5 Please **explain fully** significant variances in the accounting statements. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The auditor wants to know that **you** understand the reasons for all variances. Please include a complete analysis to support your explanation. There are a number of examples provided in the *Practitioners' Guide** to assist you.
- 6 If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which the auditor will make a charge.
- 7 Please make sure that your accounting statements add up! Please ensure that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2009) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2010).
- 8 **Do not complete section 3.** The external auditor will complete it at the conclusion of the audit.
- 9 Use the *Practitioners' Guide** for guidance. This publication is regularly updated and contains everything you should need to prepare successfully for your financial year-end and the subsequent audit. Both NALC and SLCC have helplines open should you wish to talk through any problem you may encounter.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All green boxes have been completed?	YES
	All information requested by the external auditor has been sent with this annual return? Please refer to your notice of audit.	YES
Section 1	Council approval confirmed by signature of Chair of meeting approving accounting statements?	YES
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	YES
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2010 agreed to Box 8?	YES
	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	N/A
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – all disclosures made if council is a sole managing trustee? NB: Do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	N/A
Section 2	For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation is provided?	N/A
Section 4	All green boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	YES

***Note:** Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in England – A Practitioners' Guide is available from your local NALC and SLCC representatives or from www.nalc.gov.uk or www.slcc.co.uk

Explanation of variances – proforma

Name of Council: THORNTON LE DALE PARISH COUNCIL

The NALC/SLCC "Practitioners' Guide 2008" provides guidance on explaining significant variances. This is not just a matter for the audit, as it is good practice for the RFO to provide the council with explanations for differences between one year's actual expenditure/income and the next, and between budgeted and actual expenditure/income in a year, as part of the normal budgetary control arrangements and when setting the precept.

Please explain any variances of more than 15% between the totals for individual boxes. We do not require an explanation for variances of less than £200, however, in some cases there may be 'compensating' variances which leave the overall total for a box relatively unchanged - for example, where there was a major one-off project in 2008/09 (e.g. contribution to village hall extension of £30,000), but a totally different expense of a similar size in 2009/10 (e.g. purchase of playground equipment of £28,000). In such cases it would be helpful to provide an explanation of movements within each box. We would also ask you to explain any change where there is a movement to or from zero.

Section 1	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	Variance (+/-) £	Detailed explanation of variance (with amounts £)
Box 2 Precept	19,962	20,760	+798 (4%)	
Box 3 Other income	12,988	11,395	-1,593 (12%)	SEE NOTE BOX 3
Box 4 Staff costs	4,283	4,138	-145 (3%)	
Box 5 Loan interest/ capital	—	—	—	
Box 6 Other payments	17,133	21,634	+4,501 (26%)	SEE NOTE BOX 6
Box 7 Balances carried forward	28,875	35,258	+6,383 (22%)	(If part of the year-end balances are earmarked for specific purposes rather than being a general reserve, please provide a breakdown) SEE NOTE BOX 7
Box 9 Fixed assets & long term assets	16,032	10,511	-5,521 (34%)	SEE NOTE BOX 9
Box 10 Total borrowings	—	—	—	

Additional information required for the intermediate and 5% spot check audits

In addition to the information required for the basic audit, please provide COPIES of the following:

INFORMATION REQUEST	Included?	Please provide explanation if not included
1. Copy of the financial statements at 31 March 2010 (Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheet)	Yes/No	
2. Copies of the year-end bank statements for all accounts held by the Council.	Yes/No	
3. Copy of the minute showing approval of the precept for the year ended 31 March 2010.	Yes/No	
4. Copies of all internal audit reports for the year ended 31 March 2010.	Yes/No	SAF Note 4
5. Copy of the minute and any reports by the Council in response to matters raised by the internal auditor or external auditor.	Yes/No	SAF Note 5
6. Copy of the review of effectiveness of internal audit performed by the Council for the year ended 31 Mar 2010.	Yes/No	SAF Note 6
7. Copy of the minute appointing/re-appointing the internal auditor.	Yes/No	
8. Copy of the notice of appointment of the date for the exercise of electors' rights.	Yes/No	SAF Note 7
9. Documentation in relation to all capital projects over £50k in the year: - Brief description of project (including total cost and method of funding). - Copy of minutes showing approval of project. - Copy of standing orders/financial regulations detailing the tendering process requirements. - Copies of all tenders received for the project - Copy of minutes showing selection of successful contractor. - Evidence that any subsequent contract variations have been approved by the Council. - Copies of all significant invoices and evidence of approval of payment - Details of grants received in relation to the project. - Minutes confirming satisfactory completion of the project.	Yes/No or N/A	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOUR COUNCIL		
None		

NOTE 4.

THERE ARE NO REPORTS OTHER THAN THAT INCLUDED AS PART OF THIS RETURN

NOTE 5

NO MATTERS RAISED

NOTE 6

NO REVIEW UNDERTAKEN

NOTE 7

COPY NOT KEPT. UNUSABLE IT NEEDED TO BE. A COPY WILL BE RETAINED IN FUTURE

Note Box 3

Change primarily reflects:

a reduction in interest earned on reserves of £550

a reduction in Burial Fees of £600

a reduction in grant aid received of £800
(paid in 08/09 towards cost of preparing the Village Plan

Note Box 6

Purchase of Litter Bins +£1,500
Village Caretaking Service +£4,400
Preparation of Village Plan -£1,200

Note Box 7

The Precept was raised substantially in 08/09 to cover the cost of effecting improvements in the village appearance. This work is ongoing and its full financial impact has yet to be felt.

Note Box 9

This figure has traditionally included the purchase price of gardening equipment stored at the cemetery. This equipment now has minimal value and is to be scrapped. The valuation has been decreased accordingly.