



25 May 2020

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Town Council will be held at **7:00 pm** on Tuesday 2 June 2020 via Zoom following the weblink:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88342164316?pwd=Q2hEMjZ5WENIOG9EVTdMdCs1cXVHZz09>

Meeting Password 454698.

You are invited to attend for consideration of the matters shown on the agenda.

Members of the public can join the Zoom link to observe the meeting and ask any questions in the public participation section of the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Kathryn Downs
Chairman

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are invited to address the Council and ask questions before the meeting begins.

Additionally, County and District Councillors and local PCSO (if present)

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes - to approve the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 5th May 2020
4. Chairman's Announcements
5. Items from the Clerk

- a. Recruitment Update
 - b. Schedule of Committee and Council Meetings - to consider the draft forward plan of Committee and Council Meetings (*enclosed **agenda page 10***)
 - c. Report Template for Council Meetings (*enclosed **agenda pages 8 to 9***)
 - d. IT Systems Review (*enclosed **agenda pages 11 to 18***)
 - e. CCTV Monitoring
6. Pye Green Community Centre Committee Update
7. Reports from Principal Speakers
To consider reports from Principal Speakers

Planning

*to confirm the action of the Principal Speaker for Planning in submitting observations on planning applications (enclosed **agenda page 19**)*

Regeneration, Communications and Engagement

Finance and Council Procedures

Finance/Procedures update

*Audit & AGAR (enclosed **agenda pages 20 to 36**)*

*Updated Budget 2020-21 (enclosed **agenda page 37**)*

Highways

Speed Indicator Devices

Repainted zebra crossings

Wellbeing, Isolation and Loneliness

*Report from Citizen Advice Outreach Service (enclosed **agenda pages 38 to 43**)*

Environment

Youth and Community Cohesion

Community Projects and Events

Homelessness and Vulnerable Adults

New Estates

- 8. Items for Information and next agenda
- 9. To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (if necessary)



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
HEDNESFORD TOWN COUNCIL**
(remotely on-line via zoom)
Tuesday 12th May 2020 at 19:00

NALC had given advice concerning the legality of on-line meetings; it was resolved that the notes of this meeting should be ratified by the usual procedures at a time in the future once government restrictions (Covid-19) are lifted

Present: Paul Woodhead (retiring chair), Kathryn Downs (chair elect), Andy Fittes, Emma Hunneyball, Sharon Jagger, Garry Jones, Robin Kingston, Debbie Cartwright, Arthur Roden

In Attendance: 1 member of the public

Public Participation

The Chair noted two questions submitted by a member of the public unable to attend the meeting around the circulation of an Ice Cream van during the lockdown and also noise issues with the construction work at the Common Farm site. Both of these have been reported to the appropriate department at Cannock Chase District Council for further action as appropriate.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllr Mandy Dunnnett, County Councillors Hewitt and Jones, PCSO Rob Evans.

Despite absences, the Council was quorate for voting.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared at the outset.

3. Minutes

Minutes of the meetings 11th February, 23rd March and 7th April were approved as a correct record

4. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Jagger expressed the thanks of the Council to all those working to support the community in response the Covid-19 crisis in whatever capacity as key workers, volunteers and those following government advice to stay home and stay safe. Cllr Jagger also shared the thoughts of the Council to those directly affected by the virus through family and friends.

5. Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Resolved that Cllr Kathryn Downs be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. She thereupon completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chair thanked Cllr Woodhead for his service as Chairman

6. Election of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Resolved that Cllr Robin Kingston be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. He thereupon completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

7. Principal Speaker Roles for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Resolved that the Principal Speaker roles be confirmed as following

Cllr Fittes	Planning (deputised by Sharon Jagger)
Cllr Jagger	Wellbeing Isolation and Loneliness
Cllr Cartwright	Homelessness and Vulnerable Adults
Cllr Downs	Youth and Community Cohesion
Cllr Roden	Highways
Cllr Jones	Finance and Council Procedures
Cllr Woodhead	Regeneration, Communications and Engagement
Cllr Kingston	Community Projects and Events
Cllr Dunnett	Environment
Cllr Hunneyball	New Estates

8. Appointments to External Bodies for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Resolved that the appointments to External Bodies be confirmed as following

Cannock Chase Council Standards Committee – Cllr Jagger

Cannock Chase AONB – Cllr Jones deputised by Cllr Dunnett

CHAPS – Cllr Fittes

Christmas Lights Joint Committee – Cllr Kingston

9. Town Council Committee Memberships for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Resolved that the Town Council Committee memberships be confirmed as following

Pye Green Community Centre Management Committee

Cllr Kingston (Chair), Cllr Downs, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Jones, Cllr Roden plus users of the centre

Personnel Committee

Cllr Hunneyball (Chair), Cllr Jones, Cllr Roden, Cllr Fittes, Cllr Downs

Environment Committee

Cllr Dunnett (Chair), Cllr Woodhead, Cllr Fittes members of the public

10. Schedule of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2020/21

Consideration was given to two approaches to the meeting schedules for the year ahead

Resolved that the Town Council schedule of meetings be confirmed as the first Tuesday in the Month. With a note to review business to be conducted in August and the date of the January meeting in respect to agreeing the precept.

11. Updates from Principal Speakers

Cllr Woodhead reported that Town Magazine deliveries were not completed owing to the Coronavirus lockdown and suggested these to be completed at the earliest opportunity following the lockdown.

Cllr Woodhead also reported the content of the website has been refreshed and updated

12. Items from the Clerk

(i) Standing Orders

Resolved that the Town Council Standing Orders be amended to allow remote meetings

(ii) Internal Auditor

Resolved that Sandie Morris of Black Rose Solutions Ltd be appointed as Internal Auditor for the Municipal Years 2019/20 and 2020/21

(iii) Priorities List

A discussion around the publication of the priorities list for the year head. The format was agreed as a starting point although a modification to include timeframes would be helpful moving forward. The content would be reviewed regularly and published on the website whenever updated.

(iv) Town Magazine Publication

The launch of the Town Magazine "Hednesford Life" has been affected by the Coronavirus outbreak and it was considered the impact on the businesses who supported the magazine with advertising would not have felt the benefit of the money spent. Further that these businesses may not be in a financial position to support Edition 2.

Resolved that the Town Council cover the full costs of "Hednesford Life" Edition 2 from Community Infrastructure Levy funds

(v) CCTV Monitoring

The new format of reporting be noted for CCTV Monitoring and the District Council be asked to review the language in the accompanying commentary.

(vi) Planning

That the action of the Principal Speaker for Planning in submitting observations on planning applications be confirmed.

(vii) Christmas Lights

Resolved that the arrangements with Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council and Norton Canes Parish Council be continued for this year and Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council to lead the administration of the Christmas Lights for the year ahead.

(viii) Recruitment to Officer Posts

An update was received of the progress of recruitment and the applications being received. The agreed timeframe is on track.

Resolved that the remuneration packages will also include the Local Government Pension Scheme

13. Items for Information and Next Agenda

No items were received at this time and members encouraged to liaise with the Chair regarding future agenda items

14. Public Exclusion

Noted that the public be excluded from this meeting due to the confidential nature of items under discussion.

15. End of Year 2019/20 Finances

Councillors received a confidential report from the Principal Speaker for Finance and Council Procedures in respect to issues arising from the preparation of the year end accounts. Discussions continue with the recently appointed Internal Auditor. The Assets of the Council are considerably overstated and not following any agreed accountancy rules. A potential issue was identified around historic VAT returns which requires further specialist advice.

Resolved that the proposed asset and depreciation policy be agreed and reviewed following the completion of recruitment of a Council Business and Operations Manager

Resolved that the fixed asset values be reset in accordance with accountancy rules and advice taken from the Internal Auditor

Resolved that specialist advice be engaged to resolve the potential historic VAT issue

The meeting closed at 21:10

Signed:

Dated:

Draft Report Template

Report To:	Choose an item.	Date:	
Title:			
Anticipated Time:	Choose an item.	Action:	Choose an item.
Confidentiality:	Choose an item.	Priority:	Choose an item.

Summary

Recommendation(s)

Relevant Issues and Implications	
Financial	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Value For Money	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Risk & Control	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Health & Safety	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Legal	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Human Resources	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Equal Opportunities	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
People (Public, Centre Users and Councillors)	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>

1.	Introduction
1.1	<i>Briefly introduce the reason for bringing this report.</i>
1.2	<i>Use a separate row for each paragraph.</i>
2.	Proposal
2.1	<i>Outline what you are proposing here including any relevant information.</i>
2.2	<i>Use a separate row for each paragraph.</i>
3.	Options
3.1	<i>Outline what options you have considered here.</i>
3.2	<i>Use a separate row for each option.</i>
4.	Conclusion
4.1	<i>Briefly summarise your findings in this report.</i>
4.2	<i>Use a separate row for each paragraph.</i>
5.	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<i>Recommendation 1</i>
5.2	<i>Recommendation 2, etc</i>

Appendices
<i>List any appendices that accompany this report here.</i>

For more information on this proposal please contact:
<i>Insert your contact details here.</i>

Committees & Meetings Forward Schedule

	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Annual Meeting	AGM Finance											
Town Meeting												
Council Meeting		Audited Accounts		Finance			Finance Budget		Precept	Finance		
PGCC Committee					Budget Planning							
Personnel Committee						Budget Planning						
Environment Committee				Budget Planning								



Report To:	Full Council	Date:	17/05/2020
Title:	IT Systems Review 2020		
Anticipated Time:	10 Minutes	Action:	For Recommendation
Confidentiality:	Public	Priority:	High Priority

Summary
<p>This report outlines three options for the provision of IT facilities for the Councils employees and includes several recommendations to help improve the efficiency of Council operations while minimising risks to business continuity and legislative compliance.</p>

Recommendation(s)
<p>That Hednesford Town Council APPROVE Option 2, procurement of the following IT facilities through the existing supplier – Centro Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two new laptops • 10 M365 Business Basic Licenses for Councillors • 4 M365 Business Standard Licenses for Officers • 12 Licenses for Data Arc Backup software • Migration of email to M365 • Deployment of SharePoint for shared document storage • Migration to Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and instant messaging • Handover of administration to the Business & Operations Manager and Chairman. <p>Option 2 has a total annual cost of £2,638.45 versus the current annual cost of £1,689.63</p> <p>Option 2 also has one off migration and hardware costs of £2,195.10 which it is recommended should be funded through general reserves.</p>

Relevant Issues and Implications	
Financial	An uplift in expenditure for IT equipment and licensing was not included in the 2020-21 budget,

	however with the appointment of two additional officers the expenditure is unavoidable.
Value For Money	Option 2 offers best value for money while also ensuring that IT facilities are available for the new team of officers. By handing administration of the technologies over to the Business & Operations Manager and the Chairman setup costs can be minimised and the solutions can be slowly adopted by Councillors and Officers without additional cost. Third party support will always be available on an hourly rate should the Chairman or Business & Operations Manager be unavailable. Option 2 also allows all of the benefits of Microsoft365 to be realised at lower annual cost than expanding the current basic IT setup.
Risk & Control	Shared document storage, Councillor email accounts and appropriate backup software will help to ensure that the Council is at reduced risk from Data Loss. It will also help the Council to continue to meet the obligations placed upon it by The Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) with a larger team and with more data being processed.
Health & Safety	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Legal	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
Human Resources	Recent research shows that providing employees with access to up to date technologies and providing the right tools to do the job helps to improve employee retention rates. Any colleagues who are unfamiliar with the new systems being proposed in option 2 may require training. It is proposed that either the Chairman or Business & Operations Manager undertake that training and that a Video Conference training workshop be setup if required.
Equal Opportunities	<i>No relevant issues or implications identified</i>
People (Public, Centre Users and Councillors)	Any Councillors who are unfamiliar with the new systems being proposed in option 2 may require

	<p>training. It is proposed that either the Chairman or Business & Operations Manager undertake that training via a group Zoom workshop.</p> <p>The adoption of Microsoft Teams will also remove the need for members of the public to install Zoom in future, as meetings can be accessed via the web browser instead.</p>
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1.	Introduction
1.1	To date Hednesford Town Council has had relatively modest needs for IT facilities, with most of the tasks only requiring access to Microsoft Excel, Word and Outlook for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk.
1.2	The current recruitment activities will see the Council employ four new Officers and will bring with it the need for additional IT equipment and software licenses. New Officers are expected to be IT literate and due to both the impact of Covid-19 on working arrangements and the nature of the Community Officer and Town Regeneration Manager roles, there is expected to be greater demand for additional IT facilities such as video conferencing, instant messaging and shared document storage.
1.3	With a bigger team and more data being processed across the Council we also need to take account of the risks to business continuity, information security and data privacy. Currently there is no backup system for emails and no shared document storage facilities; this makes the risk of data loss significant. Councillors use of personal email accounts and the lack of shared storage facilities for documents also presents a risk of data loss and of data privacy breaches. Relevant controls need to be implemented to mitigate this and appropriate technology will help to safeguard the Council from the associated risks of current operations.
1.4	<p>The Council currently procures the following services from Centro Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Content Filtering • Website & Domain Hosting • Email Hosting & Support • SSL Certificate for Website • Domain Name • Backup Software & Storage • FTTC (Internet Access) • Anti-Virus Protection • Office 365
1.5	<p>Of the services procured, two are already surplus to requirements, but are tied into the need for a wider service review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website & Domain Hosting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSL Certificate for Website
1.6	It should also be noted that Councillor email accounts are currently provided free of charge as historically there was little/no use of email facilities by councillors.
1.7	<p>In addition to the services supplied by Centro Systems, the following services are procured directly: Zoom Video Conferencing - £150</p> <p>It should be noted that the Councils Zoom license is for one user only, therefore only one video conference can take place simultaneously, organised and hosted by a single administrator.</p>
1.8	The Council currently has two licenses for Microsoft365 which includes many features currently unused including email facilities. The Council instead procures a separate email service from Centro Systems.
2.	Proposal
2.1	<p>We propose that Hednesford Town Council rationalise the IT services with its current supplier and take the opportunity to make better use of software and systems already procured.</p> <p>To provide safe data sharing and storage facilities, while providing more collaboration tools for employee's, we propose that the Council fully deploy Microsoft365 for both Officers and Councillors. Councillors are not issued with Council devices and therefore need only a basic license for Microsoft365 which includes Outlook, Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive. Officers will require the full functionality of Microsoft 365 and an installed version of the Microsoft Office suite and therefore require a standard license.</p>
2.2	We propose that two additional laptops be purchased at a cost of £632.55 each.
2.3	We propose that Zoom be retired and replaced with Microsoft Teams to avoid any additional license costs.
2.4	We propose that 12 additional Data Ark licenses be procured to backup Microsoft365 for all Officers and Councillors at a cost of £65 each
2.5	While putting together the following three options, we have reviewed current costs and obtained quotations from both the current supplier and an alternative supplier for cost comparisons. All prices exclude VAT.

3.	Options
3.1	<p>Option 1: That current IT systems and services remain in place, and the Council purchase additional licenses and devices for two additional members of staff through the existing supplier – Centro Systems.</p> <p>Current Operating Costs: £1,689.63</p> <p>Additional Annual Costs: £976.32</p> <p>One Off Additional Costs: £1,395</p>
3.2	<p>Option 2: That IT systems and services are updated for all colleagues and Councillors with the existing provider – Centro Systems. This option would see Centro working with the Chairman and Business & Operations Manager to fully adopt Microsoft 365 including Microsoft Office, Microsoft SharePoint for shared document management, Microsoft OneDrive for personal Document Storage, Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and instant messaging, Microsoft Planner for organising workload. Two additional laptops be purchased for two new colleagues. This option also includes the adoption of new backup software to keep data safe for all colleagues and Councillors.</p> <p>Current Operating Costs: £1,689.63</p> <p>Additional Annual Costs: £948.82</p> <p>One Off Additional Costs: £2,195.10</p>
3.3	<p>Option 3: That Microsoft 365 be implemented in full with a robust migration and testing plan by a new provider – TechCare, and all other services remain with Centro Systems. This option would see the full adoption of Microsoft 365 including Microsoft Office, Microsoft SharePoint for shared document management, Microsoft OneDrive for personal Document Storage, Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and instant messaging, Microsoft Planner for organising workload. Two additional laptops would be purchased for two new colleagues. This option also includes the adoption of new backup software to keep data safe for all colleagues and Councillors.</p> <p>Current Operating Costs: £1,689.63</p> <p>Additional Annual Costs: £948.82</p> <p>One Off Additional Costs: £4,805.96</p>
4.	Conclusion
4.1	<p>With the team of colleagues employed by Hednesford Town Council being extended, additional costs for IT facilities are unavoidable. Rather than continue with the current IT facilities there is an opportunity to</p>

	rationalise our systems and migrate to later and better technologies with a small one-off investment. The proposed changes would also serve to alleviate some of the risks to business continuity, data privacy and data loss that currently exist.
5.	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>That Hednesford Town Council APPROVE Option 2, procurement of the following IT facilities through the existing supplier – Centro Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two new laptops • 10 M365 Business Basic Licenses for Councillors • 4 M365 Business Standard Licenses for Officers • 12 Licenses for Data Arc Backup software • Migration of email to M365 • Deployment of SharePoint for shared document storage • Migration to Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and instant messaging • Handover of administration to the Business & Operations Manager and Chairman. <p>Option 2 has a total annual cost of £2,638.45 verses the current annual cost of £1,689.63</p> <p>Option 2 also has one off migration and hardware costs of £2,195.10 which it is recommended should be funded through general reserves.</p>
5.2	That the Chairman commissions the work with Centro Systems at the earliest opportunity, ready for new officers to join the Council.

Appendices
IT Cost Comparison.xlsx

For more information on this proposal please contact:
Cllr Kathryn Downs – Chairman

Microsoft 365 – What's Included?

- **Microsoft Office** – Online for Councillors, Installed for Officers
- **SharePoint** – A web portal where:
 - All documents can be centrally stored and backed up.
 - Shared calendars can be established for PGCC bookings, public meetings, etc
 - Online forms can be made available for public surveys, room bookings, etc
- **Exchange** – Full email facilities for Officers and Councillors with the ability to send from your Council email account.
- **OneDrive** – Individual document storage and document sharing with third parties. When a member of staff or a Councillor leaves the documents can be made available to the Clerk to store or delete.
- **Teams** – Video conferencing and instant messaging solution. Allows conversations to be split into themes, e.g. PGCC, Local Matters, Urgent Business, Council Meeting Agenda, etc
- **Planner** – A basic tool to manage work, assign actions and monitor delivery against deadlines



IT Systems Review 2020 – Cost Comparison

Recurring Annual Current Costs				Option 1			Option 2			Option 3		
Item	Qty	Unit	Total	Additional Qty	Additional Cost	Total Cost	Additional Qty	Additional Cost	Total Cost	Additional Qty	Additional Cost	Total Cost
Web Content Filtering (Router) 12 Month Subscription	1	£47.00	£47.00			£47.00			£47.00			£47.00
Website & Domain Hosting 12 Month Subscription	1	£120.00	£120.00			£120.00			£0.00			£0.00
Domain Name Renewal	0	£30.00	£0.00			£0.00	1	£30.00	£30.00	1	£30.00	£30.00
Email Hosting 12 Month Subscription	2	£75.00	£150.00			£150.00			£0.00			£0.00
Email Support 12 Months Subscription	1	£150.00	£150.00			£150.00			£0.00			£0.00
Additional Email	1	£30.00	£30.00	1	30	£60.00			£0.00			£0.00
SSL Certificate 24 Months Subscription	1	£95.00	£95.00			£95.00			£95.00			£95.00
Domain Name Renewal 24 Months Subscription	1	£50.00	£50.00			£50.00			£50.00			£50.00
Data Ark - Backup/Storage 12 Months Subscription	2	£60.00	£120.00	2	£120.00	£240.00	14	£840.00	£960.00	14	£840.00	£960.00
FTTC (Internet Access)	1	£431.88	£431.88			£431.88			£431.88			£431.88
ESET Anti-Virus Protection	5	£23.89	£119.43			£119.43			£119.43			£119.43
Zoom	1	£150.00	£150.00	4	£600.00	£750.00			£0.00			£0.00
Office 365 12 Months Colleague Subscription	2	£113.16	£226.32	2	£226.32	£452.64	2	£226.32	£452.64	2	£226.32	£452.64
Office 365 12 Months Councillor Subscription	0	£45.25	£0.00			£0.00	10	£452.50	£452.50	10	£452.50	£452.50

Total Annual Costs	£1,689.63	£2,665.95	£2,638.45	£2,638.45
Variance		£976.32	£948.82	£948.82

One Off Costs				Option 1			Option 2			Option 3		
Item	Qty	Cost	Total	Qty	Cost	Total	Qty	Cost	Total	Qty	Cost	Total
Setup	0	£0.00	£0.00	1	£150.00	£150.00	1	£2,760.86	£2,760.86	1	£2,760.86	£2,760.86
Laptop	2	£632.55	£1,265.10	2	£632.55	£1,265.10	2	£632.55	£1,265.10	2	£632.55	£1,265.10
Data Ark Licenses	2	£65.00	£130.00	12	£65.00	£780.00	12	£65.00	£780.00	12	£65.00	£780.00

Total One Off Costs	£1,395	£2,195.10	£4,805.96
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Annex 1 - List of Planning Applications

Application	Application Location and Description	Response
CH/145	Proposed Annex (re-submission of CH/19/441). Location: 7 Bedford Place, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1LJ.	We had no objections and noted the changes made to the previous application and the need to meet planning regs.
CH/155	Proposed single storey rear extension Location: 156, Miners Way, Hednesford, WS12 4WL.	No objections raised regarding this application.
CH/161	Retention of works to the rear garden and retention of fence. Location: 31, Littleworth Hill, Littleworth, Cannock, WS12 1NS.	No objections regards this application.
CH/112	Change of Use from Garage & Store to Residential Unit (C3) - AMENDED PLANS Location: 4 Beeston Court, Cannock, WS12 4HY.	The application lacks a clear site plan and is unclear as to ownership of the garage. The Council is not supportive of this application.
CH/146	Change of use From A1 to eatery A3 (eat in) and A5 (takeaway) and for the extensions to the rear. Location: 30 Market Street, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1AF.	No objections to this application subject to appropriate permissions regards disabled access and parking.
CH/167	Extension to dwelling Location: 15 Anglesey Street, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1AB.	Planning portal not online in order to make observations at this time.
CH/168	Conversion of derelict Public House into 2 apartments and the provision of 6 detached and semi detached 2 storey houses including private access road. Location: Queens Arms, 37, Hill Street, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1DJ.	No objections to this development on the site which has been derelict for some time.

Annual Accounts, AGAR and Audit for Full Council – Overview

As this is the first year for which we as a council are fully responsible for the accounts and associated processes, I thought it might be useful to provide an overview paper that outlines the steps of the process that you need to be aware of, the actions we are taking or approving as a full council, and as a guide to the associated documents.

Steps of the process:

1. RFO completes the annual accounts
2. Internal auditor audits the accounts and associated financial management systems
3. Proposed changes may be recommended by the auditor and agreed by the RFO
4. Internal auditor produces final report and completes & signs page 3 of the AGAR
5. RFO completes and signs the accounting statements on page 5 of the AGAR and completes explanations of significant variances
6. **The accounts, bank reconciliation, report of the internal auditor, AGAR, explanation of variances and proposed exercise of electors rights are considered by the full council (see below)**
7. Completed documentation submitted to external auditor alongside additional external audit requirements (annual list of extra things they want to check) – before 1 July (usually)
8. Concurrently we publish (on website) the details for exercising of electors rights and the signed AGAR forms also usually before 1 July.
9. When received the external audit certificate and amended AGAR (usually before 1 October)

Actions to be agreed / approved by Full Council:

1. **To review, query and ultimately agree the full accounts**
2. **To review, query and ultimately agree the annual bank reconciliation**
3. **To review, query and ultimately agree/reject any recommendations of the internal auditor to be taken forward**
4. **To agree the governance statement on page 4 of the AGAR (signed by Clerk and Chairman)**
5. **To agree the financial statements on page 5 of the AGAR (signed by Chairman)**
6. **To review, query and ultimately agree the accompanying statement of significant variances**
7. **To approve the proposed exercise of electors' rights**

Associated Documents:

- a. Annual accounts 2019-2020 x2, full and summary
- b. Bank reconciliation 2019-2020
- c. Internal Auditors report x2, report and letter
- d. Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR)
- e. Explanation of Significant variances
- f. Exercise of Electors Rights

Garry Jones

Interim Responsible Financial Officer

May 2020

Hednesford Town Council - Actuals against Budget 2019-2020

As at: 31/03/2020

	Budget 2019/20	Actual 2019/20	Variance to date from Budget
RECEIPTS			
Precept	137500	137,500	0
Sales of Assets	0	0	0
VAT Recovered	0	10,959	10,959
Interest Received	700	1,879	979
Fundraising Income	0	0	0
Project Sponsorship	0	5,000	5,000
Miscellaneous Income	100	58,843	58,543
Community Infrastructure Levy	0	46,859	46,859
Sub-total General Income	138300	258,639	120,339
PGCC - Meeting Room Lettings	0	13,013	(3,487)
PGCC - Function Room Lettings	33000	25,207	8,707
PGCC - Bar Takings	500	486	(14)
Sub-total Community Hall Income	33500	38,706	5,206
TOTAL RECEIPTS	171800	297,345	125,545
PAYMENTS			
General Administration			
VAT on Payments	0	10,899	10,899
Clerk - Salary	26000	28,121	2,121
Clerk - Tax,NI,Pension	26000	22,317	(3,683)
Clerk - Travelling	100	1	(99)
Telephone/broadband	1200	1,107	(93)
Stationery Items	250	159	(91)
Postage	800	425	(375)
Photocopying	750	727	(23)
Computer software & Maintenance	300	727	427
Furniture & Equipment	200	0	(200)
Subscriptions	1400	1,104	(296)
Insurance	1500	1,260	(240)
Audit Fees	400	640	240
Professional Fees	745	623	(122)
Councillor Training	200	75	(125)
Clerk Training	50	0	(50)
Conference Fees	100	0	(100)
Cllrs Travel	0	0	0
Chairmans Allowance	1000	0	(1,000)
Bank Charges	150	211	61
Sub-total General Expenditure	61145	68,194	7,049
Pye Green Community Hall			
PGCH Electric	5000	8,033	3,033
PGCH Monthly/annual Utility Checks, Fire Exting Serv	700	532	(168)
PGCH Water Rates	1500	1,102	(398)
PGCH Insurance	1300	1,136	(164)
PGCH Salaries/pension/tax	26000	29,833	3,833
PGCH Rates	7500	5,933	(1,567)
PGCH Licencing	180	180	0
PGCH Refuse Collection	1100	1,181	81
PGCH Sanitary Disposal	350	237	(113)
PGCH Minor Repairs	1000	729	(271)
PGCH Cleaning, Refreshements, Gardening	900	973	73
PGCH Building Maintenance & Upgrades	3000	472	(2,528)
PGCH Security	700	727	27
PGCH Bar Equipment	200	400	200
PGCH Furniture & Equipment	0	0	0
PGCH Advertising & Marketing Cost	150	0	(150)
PGCH Public Works Loan Board	17432	17,432	(0)
Sub-total PGCC	67012	68,901	1,889
Service & Support Activities			
CCTV - Running Expenses	24000	24,885	885
Grants Section 137	5200	3,969	(1,231)
Citizens Advice	10000	10,000	0
Publicity, Promotion, Website, PR Support	4500	8,010	3,510
Election Costs	12000	14,451	2,451
Events Section 144	9000	8,073	(927)
Hednesford Street Lights	5000	8,091	3,091
Heritage Committee	500	0	(500)
Misc	1000	2,882	1,882
Town Centre Maintenance	800	657	(143)
Sub-total Activities	72000	80,817	8,817
Community Infrastructure Levy			
Sub-total CIL	0	0	0
TOTAL PAYMENTS	200157	217,912	17,755
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-£ 28,357	£ 79,433	£ 107,790

**Hednesford Town Council
Unity Trust Bank Reconciliation 31/03/20**

Bank Balances

Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£	3,956
Unity Trust Instant Savings	£	86,780
Nationwide 2 Year Savings (<1 yr remaining)	£	51,505
Nationwide 125 Day Savings	£	50,838
LESS O/S cheques	£	-
Total at Bank	£	<u>193,080</u>

Receipts & Payments Accounts

Reserves B/F	£	113,246
Receipts	£	292,802
Payments	£	213,368
Reserves C/F	£	<u>192,679</u>
Cash Book Balance	£	<u>192,679</u>

Assets & Investments

Assets	£	400
Investments	£	-
<u>Cash & Assets & Investments</u>	£	<u>193,079</u>

Signed:

Dated:

Name: Cllr Garry Jones
Role: Interim Responsible Financial Officer

Black Rose Solutions Ltd

Internal Audit - Report

Name of Council Hednesford Town Council
Date of Audit 27th April to 16th May

Annual Return - Internal Control Objectives

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	YES
<p>Is the cashbook maintained and up to date? yes</p> <p>Is the cashbook arithmetic correct? yes</p> <p>Is the cashbook regularly balanced? yes</p> <p>The cashbook is maintained in an Excel Spreadsheet, no material errors or omissions were observed.</p> <p>The council intends to move to the Scribe accounting system, the council should be aware that transitional periods can create risks, that care should be taken that control procedures are appropriately transferred to the new system (perhaps during a period of using both systems), and ensure that staff have sufficient support, resources and training to undertake this transition efficiently and effectively.</p>	NOTE
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
<p>Are payments supported by invoices? yes</p> <p>Is all expenditure approved? yes</p> <p>Is VAT appropriately accounted for? yes*</p> <p>Hire of rooms in the community centre counts a VAT exempt business supplies, as such VAT can only be reclaimed if it is considered "insignificant". The council is required to evaluate this and keep records in case of a VAT audit. The total VAT reclaim for the year is over the insignificant threshold (£7500). Upon request analysis was provided that shows the reclaim relating to exempt business is below the threshold. The council needs to be aware of these regulations and ensure that they remain compliant in the future.</p> <p>VAT has been reclaimed on receipts for expenses - however some of the items are zero rated for VAT (e.g. Milk & coffee) leading to an overclaim. The council could consider a redesign of the expenses form to ensure that VAT is correctly identified, this may include a full breakdown of receipts (rather than summary totals) itemising net and VAT values, the signature of the claimer confirming a valid council expense etc.</p>	NOTE REC

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	YES
<p>Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity? no</p> <p>Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment? yes</p> <p>Is Insurance cover appropriate and adequate? yes*</p> <p>Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed? yes*</p> <p>The council holds a comprehensive, tailored insurance policy, however, as the council does not hold an asset register, it cannot be verified that insurance levels are adequate.</p> <p>Financial regulations are in place and periodically reviewed (last update being 2018), however, due to the departure of key staff and the remote audit it was not possible to fully verify what controls have actually been in place. Financial Regulations (and other policy documents) should be reviewed at least annually.</p>	<p>NOTE</p> <p>NOTE</p>

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	YES
<p>Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept? yes</p> <p>Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council? yes*</p> <p>Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget? no</p> <p>Financial Regulations 4.8 states that a comparison of actual v budgeted receipts and payments should be reported quarterly to the council. This has not been done consistently throughout the year. It is important that the council is aware of the financial "performance" of the council to ensure that significant over (or under) spends do not occur without proper and timely consideration.</p> <p>The council has reserves of £192679 - including £69504 Community Infrastructure Levy reserve. This leaves general reserves around 50% of annual expenditure (a council should typically hold between 3 and 12 months expenditure as a general reserve.)</p>	REC

<p>E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</p>	<p>YES</p>								
<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 300 1021 336">Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 300 1252 336">yes*</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 336 1021 371">Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax</td> <td data-bbox="1021 336 1252 371">yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 371 1021 434">Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 371 1252 434">yes*</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 434 1021 497">Is the council VAT registered? Are returns submitted in a timely manner.</td> <td data-bbox="1021 434 1252 497">yes, yes</td> </tr> </table> <p>Due to the remote audit and staff departures it was not possible to fully interrogate the income records and procedures. The various reports were not obviously referenced in terms of following an audit trail, though with the assistance of the Acting RFO it was possible to track items back to source records. (This would presumably have been much easier in person with staff present.)</p> <p>It appears that cash received is kept in a cash tin in a locked filing cabinet, with cash being banked up to 2 weeks after receipt. It was not possible to verify whether this was a typical timeframe and Financial Regulations do not state what a reasonable time would be.</p> <p>The move to a (non-excel) accounting system should remedy some of these difficulties as it will be possible to track cash received, and will also provide other control reports regarding overdue debts etc.</p>	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	yes*	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax	yes	Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	yes*	Is the council VAT registered? Are returns submitted in a timely manner.	yes, yes	<p>NOTE</p>
Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	yes*								
Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax	yes								
Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	yes*								
Is the council VAT registered? Are returns submitted in a timely manner.	yes, yes								
<p>F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was</p>	<p>N/a</p>								
<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 958 1021 994">Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT</td> <td data-bbox="1021 958 1252 994">n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 994 1021 1030">Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 994 1252 1030">n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 1030 1021 1066">Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 1030 1252 1066">n/a</td> </tr> </table> <p>The council does not hold petty cash, miscellaneous expenditure is incurred by staff and reclaimed via expenses.</p>	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT	n/a	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	n/a	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	n/a			
Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT	n/a								
Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	n/a								
Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	n/a								
<p>G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</p>	<p>YES</p>								
<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 1310 1021 1373">Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 1310 1252 1373">no</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 1373 1021 1408">Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 1373 1252 1408">yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 1408 1021 1471">Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 1408 1252 1471">yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 1471 1021 1534">Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?</td> <td data-bbox="1021 1471 1252 1534">yes</td> </tr> </table> <p>Payroll is outsourced. PAYE/NIC appear to have been properly operated by the council as an employer. However, some employees do not have up to date contracts.</p> <p>There is no procedure in place to identify off-payroll workers in line with recent legislation (IR35) that makes this the responsibility of the council and not the "worker". It is important that council assesses "suppliers" in regards to the criteria for "off payroll workers" and ensure that the council then meets any statutory duties (to issue a determination and/or report and pay appropriate payroll taxes.)</p>	Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?	no	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	yes	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	yes	<p>REC</p> <p>REC</p>
Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?	no								
Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	yes								
Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes								
Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	yes								

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	NO
<p>Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care? no</p> <p>Are the assets and investments registers up to date? no</p> <p>Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register? no</p> <p>An asset register should be prepared, kept up to date, reviewed in regards to risk assessments in regards to security or public safety and compared to insurance valuations. It also provides a record of continuous ownership, and a check that any additions or disposals during the year have been properly accounted for.</p>	REC

I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	YES
<p>Is there a bank reconciliation for each account? yes</p> <p>Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion? yes</p> <p>Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any? no</p> <p>Is the value of investments held summarised on the? yes</p> <p>Bank reconciliations have been prepared monthly by the deputy clerk and reviewed and signed off by the clerk. No errors or unexplained reconciling items were noted.</p> <p><i>Financial Regulations - 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the RFO shall submit a report to the Council to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts). Bank Reconciliations should be periodically reviewed by councillors, and minuted as such.</i></p>	REC

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	YES
<p>Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) ? receipts and payments</p> <p>Do accounts agree with the cashbook? yes</p> <p>Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts? yes*</p> <p>The council prepares receipts and payments accounts, however various transactions had been "netted off" (shown as negative receipts or payments) meaning that both receipts and payments were understated. <i>Governance and accountability 5.123 states that the receipts and payments basis requires authorities only to consider their actual bank and cash transactions. The entries for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return will usually be taken straight from the summary totals in the cash book.</i> Upon discussion the Acting RFO restated the accounts.</p> <p>Audit trail - see note in section E</p>	NOTE

K. Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/a
The council does not act as a trustee.	
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the	YES
Notice states rights of inspection were between 1st July and 9th August 2019	



Black Rose Solutions Limited

74 Leacroft Road
Penkridge
Staffs
ST19 5BU

0781 321 7576
sandie.morris@blackrosesolutions.co.uk

19th May 2020

Dear Garry,

Hednesford Town Council - Internal Audit 2019/20

I confirm that I have carried out an examination of your accounts and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Despite the social distancing limitations imposed by Covid19 it has been possible to complete Internal Audit work, I collected a box of paperwork and have communicated with the Acting RFO by email for any queries.

I can state that I have some concerns, summarised over and in the attached report.

I consider that the audit arrangements were "adequate", however due to the Covid19 situation, this being my first engagement with Hednesford Town Council, and the recent departure of key staff the audit could not be as comprehensive as I would normally offer.

I would also confirm that I am totally independent of your Council and have no contact, at any level, with any Member, employee or supplier.

Your sincerely,

Mrs Sandra Morris ACMA

Black Rose Solutions Limited, Registered in England and Wales No. 6136400
Registered Address : 74 Leacroft Road, Penkridge, Staffs, ST19 5BU

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 Part 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 must complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:
 - The Annual Internal Audit Report is completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - Sections 1 and 2 are to be completed and approved by the authority.
 - Section 3 is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority must approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both must be approved and published before 1 July 2020.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, must return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2020. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on a publicly accessible website:

Before 1 July 2020 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, approved and signed, page 4
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2019/20, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2020 authorities must publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate
- Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this Annual Governance and Accountability Return. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Where amendments are made by the authority to the AGAR after it has been approved by the authority and before it has been reviewed by the external auditor, the Chairman and RFO should initial the amendments and if necessary republish the amended AGAR and recommence the period for the exercise of public rights. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report if possible before approving the annual governance statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2020.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, you **must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2019) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2020).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the period for the exercise of public rights. From the commencement date for a single period of 30 consecutive working days, the approved accounts and accounting records can be inspected. Whatever period the RFO sets it **must** include a common inspection period – during which the accounts and accounting records of all smaller authorities must be available for public inspection – of the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2020.**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		✓
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?		✓
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		✓
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Hednesford Town Council

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this authority'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 this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.		✓	
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		
M. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

07/05/2020

DD/MM/YY

DD/MM/YY

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Sandie Morris

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

16/05/2020

*If the response is 'no' you must include a note to 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, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

Hednesford Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for 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 2020, that:

	Agreed		*Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

02/06/2020

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Other information required by the Transparency Codes (not part of Annual Governance Statement)

Authority web address

www.hednesford-tc.gov.uk

AUTHORITY WEBSITE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

Hednesford Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	
1. Balances brought forward	145,808	113,246	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. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	137,500	137,500	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	66,501	159,845	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	75,730	80,271	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	17,432	17,432	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	143,401	120,209	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	113,246	192,679	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	113,246	192,679	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 plus long term investments and assets	51,320	400	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	163,658	153,754	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.
		✓	

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 31/05/2020

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

02/06/2020

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of

Ed Hednesford Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2019/20

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2020.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

*Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Hednesford Town Council - Explanation of significant variances in the Accounting Statement 2020

Section 2	2019 €	2020 €	Variance €	Variance %	Explanation of variances of more than 15% +/- if greater than €200
Box 2 Precept	137,500	137,500	0	0%	Not required
Box 3 Total other receipts	66,501	159,845	+93,344	+140.4%	£850 increase in bank interest; New £1.02k from local business sponsorship of Town Magazine; £4.17k increase in VAT reimbursed; £4.34k from neighbouring Parishes related to joint Christmas lights contract, not previously recorded as income; New £5.0k grant from Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership; £26.44k increase in Community Infrastructure Levy payment and £50.95k increase due to being transferred in from long term investment
Box 4 Staff costs	75,730	80,271	+4,541	+6.0%	Not required
Box 5 Loan interest/capital repayments	17,432	17,432	0	0%	Not required
Box 6 All other payments	143,401	120,209	-23,192	-16.2%	£1.0k less on Chairman Allowance; £3.92k increase on salaries for Community Centre due to increased usage; £5.0k less to Citizens Advice due to end of UC project; £2.55k increase due to new website and new PR service; £14.45k increase due to election costs, it being an election year; £4.47k increase on events, mainly due to summer festival; £50.95k less as no payments made to long term investments this year; plus some other small increases in several other budget lines
Box 9 Total fixed assets	Restated: 51320	400	-50,920	-99.2%	£50.95k less as transferred to receipts from long term investments; remaining assets restated based on new depreciation policy (1/3 over three years). Community Centre building removed as not owned by Town Council, rather it is operated on a long-term lease from the District Council. Majority of contents assumed to have fully depreciated as purchased over 3 years ago.
Box 10 – Total Borrowings	163,658	153,754	-9,904	-6.1%	Not required

Hednesford Town Council

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE &
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Account and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 No. 234)

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

NOTICE

1. **Date of announcement:- 9 June 2020**

2. **Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provide for:**

Inspection: Any persons interested may inspect and make copies of the Annual Return and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts etc. relating to them. For the year ended 31 March 2020 these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:

Cllr Garry Jones
Interim Responsible Financial Officer
Hednesford Town Council
finance@hednesford-tc.gov.uk

Or
Pye Green Community Centre
Bradbury Lane
Hednesford
Staffordshire
WS12 4EP

Questions and objections to the external auditor: Local Government electors and their representatives have rights to:

- question the auditor about the accounting records; and.
- make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the external auditor and a copy sent to the Council. Objections must concern a matter of which the external auditor could make a public interest report or apply for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful

3. **Any rights of inspection, objection and questioning of the auditor may only be exercised within a period of 30 working days commencing on 29 June 2020 and ending on 7 August 2020**

4. **Your audit is being carried out by:**

MAZARS
SALVUS HOUSE, AYKLEY HEADS, DURHAM DH1 5TS
0191 383 6348

Hednesford Town Council - Budget 2020-2021 v3						
RECEIPTS	General	Community	Town	PGCC	TOTAL	
Precept	27000	51000	72500	44000	194500	
Community Infrastructure Levy					0	
Fundraising Income					0	
VAT Recovered	464	1305	5455	3156	10380	estimated from VATable spend below
Interest Received	700				700	
PGCC - Meeting Room Lettings				16500	16500	
PGCC - Function Room Lettings				16500	16500	
PGCC - Bar Takings				500	500	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	28164	52305	77955	80656	239080	239080
PAYMENTS	General	Community	Town	PGCC	TOTAL	
Personnel						
Salaries/NI/Pension - see tab	19562	19838	45252	36636	121288	81964
Travel Expenses	50	125	125		300	
Training	50			500	550	
Office Costs						
Telephone/broadband	500	50	50	600	1200	
Mobile Phones		340	340		680	purchase and rental @£20pm
Postage	300	50	50	400	800	
Photocopying	300	100	100	375	875	
Computer software & Maintenance	100	50	50	150	350	
Stationery Items	100	25	25	125	275	
Marketing & Communications						
M&C Support	2000	500	500	1000	4000	
Marketing	250	250	2000	150	2650	
Website	250	250	250	250	1000	
Insurance/Legal/Subscriptions						
Insurance - buildings	65	35	35	1170	1305	
Insurance - ELI/PLI	300	300	300	600	1500	
Subscriptions	1000	100	100	200	1400	
Professional Fees	745				745	
Licencing				180	180	
Fees & Charges						
Loan Repayment				17432	17432	
Audit Fees	200	50	50	100	400	
Bank Charges	50	25	25	50	150	
Councillor Costs						
Election Costs	0				0	presume not required this year
Chairmans Expenses	500	200	200	100	1000	
Councillor Training	200				200	
Conference Fees	100				100	
Cilrs Travel	100	50	50	50	250	
Town Activities						
CCTV			24000		24000	
Town Centre Maintenance			4000		4000	
Community Events						
Hednesford Christmas Lights		5000			5000	
Hednesford Summer Festival		3000			3000	
Community Events		6000			6000	
Community Grants						
Citizens Advice		5000			5000	
Grant Applications		10000			10000	
Discretionary Grants		1000			1000	
PGCC Utilities & Rates						
Electricity	500			4500	5000	
Business Rates	750			6750	7500	
Water	150			1350	1500	
H&S Checks	70			630	700	
PGCC Services						
Refuse Collection				1100	1100	
Security				700	700	
Sanitary Disposal				350	350	
Cleaning				400	400	
Gardening				300	300	
Refreshments				200	200	
PGCC Equipment & Repairs						
Building Maintenance & Upgrades				3000	3000	
Minor Repairs				1300	1300	
Bar Equipment				200	200	
Furniture & Equipment	100	800	800	100	1800	new laptops
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£ 28,292	£ 53,138	£ 78,302	£ 80,948	£ 240,680	£ 240,680
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-£128	-£833	-£347	-£292	-£1,600	
VAT able expenditure	2320	6525	27275	15780	24625	

Hednesford Town Council – Pye Green Community Centre – Annual Report 2019-20

Citizens Advice Staffordshire South West (CASSW) receives funding from Hednesford Town Council to provide an advice service at the Pye Green Community Centre since 2009. The service provides an advice worker on Thursday, weekly. The service is available for people to drop in and wait, rather than fixed appointment times, and informal feedback shows that this suits service users best.

The service has proved its value in 2019-20. In total CASSW has helped 390 individual residents from the Hednesford area; 29% of those chose to be seen at Pye Green drop in centre.

From the enquiries that were made at the centre, 310 activities were recorded showing that a client can be seen numerous times at the centre to be assisted with their issue to take it to a possible resolution. 33.8% of issues dealt with related to Benefits and Tax Credits, followed by Debt (14.5%), Relationships and family, Housing and Employment were all very equal. This is a usual trend across CASSW.

A local outreach service is vital for those people who would ordinarily have difficulty in accessing face to face advice services. 49% of clients seen at this outreach are recorded as having a disability or long-term health condition.

From the drop in centre some clients are referred into the main service to see specialist caseworkers for debt or housing issues that need additional support. Debt recorded for Hednesford residents was £559,892 for the year. In total CASSW have recorded income gains of £833,234 for Hednesford residents as a result of advice interventions. This in turn provides benefit to the local economy.

Universal Credit is the biggest ever change we have seen to the welfare system. As Universal Credit rolled out across Staffordshire, Citizens Advice Staffordshire South West have been providing local people with direct advice and support to make a claim. As part of the outreach work that we do we set up a service at the Pye Green Community centre. This service operated on a Tuesday afternoon and was in addition to the general advice service operating every Thursday.

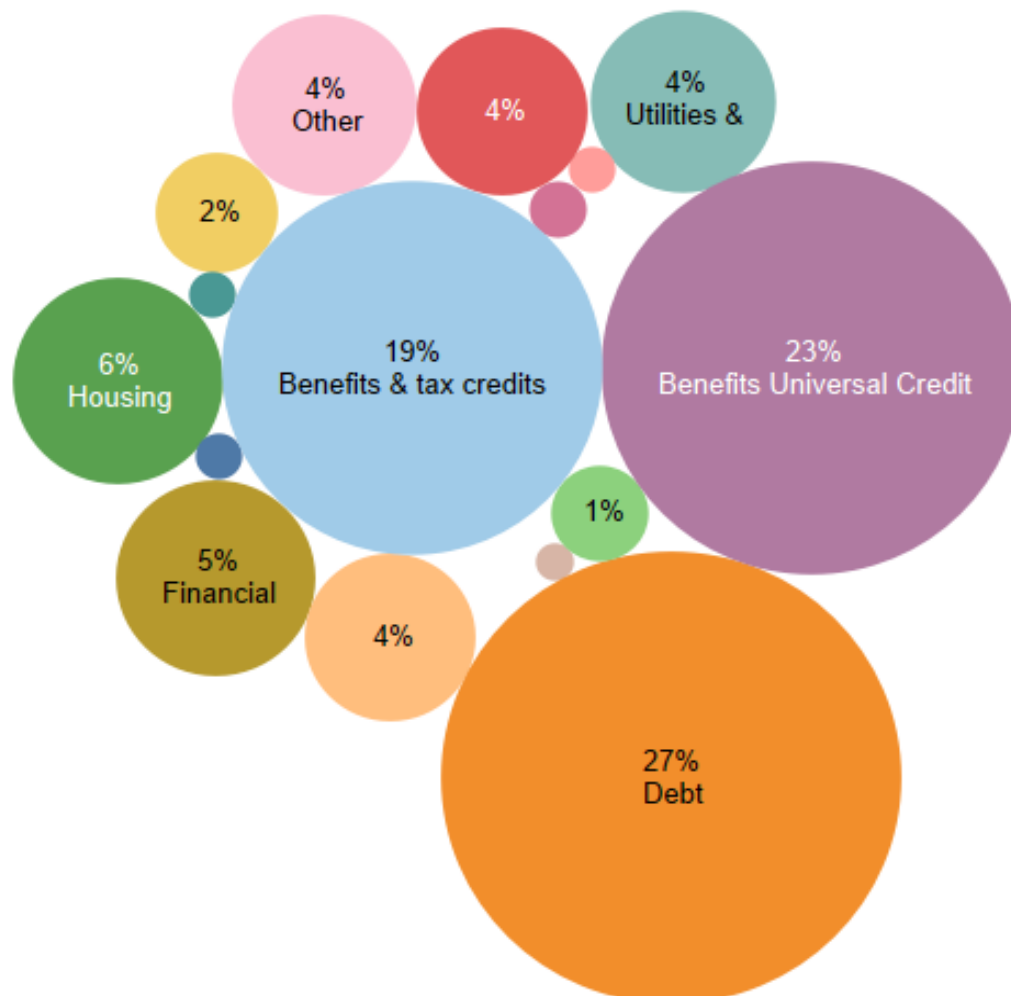
Having the right support in place is key to helping people navigate the changes. Citizens Advice is able to deliver a comprehensive and consistent support service, to help ensure everyone can access the support they need to complete a Universal Credit claim and provide clients with support until they receive their first payment. We will also carry out complete benefit checks to ensure that Universal credit is the right benefit for the client to claim. Often a client is better off staying on one of the legacy benefits and we need to ensure that clients know all of their options.

Universal Credit is digital by default but for some people completing an online claim isn't possible so we support them to complete their claim online or advise them about other options and help them to access Universal Credit by phone or with home visit support.

374 Hednesford residents have received support from our Help to Claim team, 20 chose to be seen within the Pye Green Centre.

CASSW has a Pension Wise specialist contract and 35 residents have been seen by our team this year.

Advice Issues dealt with for Hednesford residents



These case studies are an example of how we have helped clients in the local area:

Case study 1

Client Profile

The client is 68 years old, married and lives in a 3 bedroomed house which they own outright.

He has a long term health condition which significantly impacts his hearing. He lip reads to understand people and can verbally communicate therefore unable to use a phone. The client has just recovered from cancer.

The client is retired and receives state pension £730/month, his wife works part time and receives an income of £1000 per month

Description of client's enquiry

He retired in April 2018 and believed that he was due a tax refund from HMRC. The client's wife had tried to speak to HMRC about the tax refund but had not been successful and they were not accepting his wife as the clients personal representation.

The client wanted support with contacting the HMRC and the tax refund 2018/2019

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 1

The client gave permission for the adviser to contact HMRC Tax office and spoke with HMRC in Cardiff.

The client's situation was explained to HMRC:

- The client believed he was due a tax refund for the tax year 2017/2018
- The client's wife had called HMRC on behalf of her husband but had not been successful with gaining support from HMRC the tax refund
- The client is registered deaf
- The client requires his wife to be his personal representation on the HMRC system as he is unable to use a phone

HMRC reviewed the clients tax information and confirmed that the client was due a tax refund of £393.14. A cheque would be sent to the client and the client should receive the cheque within 14 days

HMRC confirmed that the client would receive a letter confirming the tax refund and his wife being registered as his personal representation in the HMRC system.

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 2

A month later the client returned as he had not received the tax refund from HMRC which was due within 14 days of the telephone call but had received a confirmation letter that £393.00 was to be refunded by cheque.

The client wanted help to ring HMRC as his wife is too scared to ring due to the client being deaf and problems she had had before with the HMRC when trying to speak on his behalf. A second call was made and HMRC agreed to re - issue the cheque and advised that the client would receive the cheque in 2 - 3 weeks time.

Outcomes for the client

The client was relieved that there is a Citizen Advice drop in service available to him in his local area.

The client difficulties and stress had been removed in contacting HMRC and as a result Citizen Advice were able to support the client to claim his tax refund for the tax year 2017/2018.

The client was very happy with the outcome and the support provided by the adviser.

Case study 2

Client Profile

The client is 73 years old, widowed, at the end of 2019, and lives in a 1 bedroomed bungalow .

She has lived in the UK since late 2015 and has no health issues. She currently has a VISA based on spouse/partner leave to remain which expires in 18 months, the visa conditions are that the client has no recourse to public funds but client has the right to work (work permitted).

The client is retired and cannot claim any benefits and is living off her savings.

Description of client's enquiry

The client's tenancy agreement was in her deceased husband's name. The council is planning to have the tenancy agreement transferred into the client's name.

The client had contacted the council and they asked her to provide a National Insurance (NI) number but she does not have one. She has tried to get an NI

number from the DWP but has not succeeded and would want support to obtain the NI number.

She had submitted an application for indefinite leave to remain (IDLR) so she will be able to access public funds if successful and required support through this process.

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 1 - IDLR

The Client was advised:

1. The client was correct to apply for the indefinite leave to remain visa as this can take several months unless it is fast tracked and a decision can be made in days, but this costs £3500
2. Provided the client had completed the form correctly and the client submitted evidence that she and her husband were living together at the time of his death then the client should be approved for indefinite leave to remain status.
3. Once the client has indefinite leave to remain status this immigration/visa status then the client will have recourse to public funds.
4. In the meantime the client has no rights to access public funds
5. In relation to housing then sole tenancy may be granted to someone who is eligible (for example a British person or person settled in the UK) but whose spouse/partner is not eligible. The client did not need to obtain the immigration status of indefinite leave to remain to remain in the property and take over the tenancy

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 2 - IDLR

The client explained that she had paid to have her indefinite leave to remain (IDLR) to be fast tracked. She wanted advice on which of the 3 documents she had been sent, for her immigration appointment, she needed to complete.

The Adviser contacted the immigration helpline who confirmed that only one document (part 1) was relevant for the appointment. The immigration adviser also confirmed that following the immigration appointment the IDLR decision should take 2 working days

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 3/4 - IDLR/NI

The client had received confirmation that her application for IDLR had been granted and the adviser confirmed that the client will now have access to public funds.

The National Insurance Helpline was called and the client was assisted in requesting an NI number on the basis of benefits.

She needs her NI number for future claim to benefits, for Council Housing, GP etc. Following advice that NI numbers would only be issued to someone claiming a

benefit, the adviser assisted the client in making a claim for Pension Credit which would assist the client obtaining a NI number.

The client was given a pension credit application number and told she would receive a home visit

Advice Given and issues discussed - Advice Session 5 - NI

The client bought in a letter from Cannock Chase Council which confirmed that her application to have the tenancy placed in her name had been confirmed, she also explained that she has been visited by the pension credit team at home.

The pension credit team has confirmed that if the client application for pension credit is accepted that the client will receive an NI automatically. This process can take upto 45 days for a decision.

Outcomes for the client

1. The client obtained her Indefinite Leave to Remain immigration status
2. The tenancy was transferred from her husbands name into the client's name so she could continue to live there
3. The client having IDLR status means the client could apply for access to public funds
4. The benefits the client would be entitled too are
 - a. State Pension Credit £7,100
 - b. Housing Benefit £4,000
 - c. CTR £1,200

Total Benefits £12,300

5. Successful application for a benefit would mean the client will get allocated a National Insurance Number

This case was complex and without the support of the local Citizens Advice service the client would have continued to experience difficulties and potentially would have ended up homeless and with no access to public funds.

The client was very happy with the outcome and the support provided by the adviser.