

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council
ANNUAL RETURN - Section 2 : Statement of Accounts

Explanation of variances

This is prepared based on information in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils : a Practitioner's Guide"

Important note: These figures have been prepared on an INCOME and EXPENDITURE basis.

Box No.	Description	31/03/2024 £	31/03/2025 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Notes
1	Balances brought fwd	322,915	428,388				BALANCE B/F AGREES NB When the VAT refund issue (see Internal's report) is fixed the 428,388 Balance bf will need to be restated as 420,376 (8,012 less - see box 7 A).
2	Annual precept	160,890	167,390	6,500	4%	No	
3	Total other receipts	119,331	177,250	57,919	49%	Yes	55,853.29 of this increase comes from: CIL receipts up 33,927; OCC Councillor grants up 8,070; Interments up 7,323; Water charge refunds up 2,548; Bank interest up 1,593. See attached annotated sheet for complete breakdown of receipts. NB When the VAT refund issue (see Internal's report) is fixed: A) the 31/03/24 119,331 total receipts will need to be restated as 111,110 (reduction of 4,322+3,899 = total of 8,221) see Box 7, and B) the 31/03/25 177,250 total receipts will need to be restated to 164,090 due to three FY2024-2025 VAT refunds (of +4,364 +3,284 +5,512 a total of +13,160) mistakenly entered in our accounting package as Net instead of VAT.
4	Staff Costs	56,924	62,805	5,882	10%	No	
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	0	0%	No	
6	Total other payments	117,824	183,849	66,025	56%	Yes	Street lighting (electricity+maintenance) up 10,989; Street light replacements up 5,742; Parish office (move) up 5,034; Legal fees up 2,335; Audit costs up 2,330; See attached annotated sheet for complete breakdown of payments. NB When the VAT refund issue (see Internal's report) is fixed the 117,824 Total other payments will need to be restated as 117,615 (reduction of 209) see box 7.

7	Balances carried forward	428,388	526,373	97,985	23%	Yes	<p>CIL receipts of 62,415 to be used for new playground;</p> <p>NB When the VAT refund issue (see Internal's report) is fixed:</p> <p>A) the 31/03/24 Balance c f of 428,388 will need to be restated as 420,376 (8,012 less) due to two FY2023-2024 VAT refunds (of +4,322 +3,899) and a further 209 (4,322+3,899-209= 8,012) entered as a payment instead of a negative refund (the VAT due exceeded the refund) all being mistakenly entered in our accounting package as Net instead of VAT.</p> <p>B) the 31/03/25 Balance c f of 526,373 will need to be restated as 505,202 (21,172 less) due to 1) the 8,012 lower 31/03/25 restated balance brought forward and 2) three FY2024-2025 VAT refunds (of +4,364 +3,284 +5,512, total 13,160) mistakenly entered in our accounting package as Net instead of VAT.</p>
8	Total Cash and Short Term Investments	413,099	494,744	81,644	20%	Yes	CIL receipts of 62,415 to be used for new playground;
9	Total Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments	609,981	629,937	19,956	3%	No	
10	Total Borrowings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	No	

This report is intended as a guide to the variances you may need to explain. The specific requirements vary between external auditors so please check the requirements shown on the pro forma provided to your council

Please note a breakdown of approved reserves will also be required if the total reserves (Box 7) figure is more than twice the annual precept value (Box 2)

Cost Centre Year Comparison Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes

All Cost Centres and Codes							
Code Title	Current Year Budgeted	Last Year Budgeted	Recipts	Receipts	Difference		Explanation
			Current Year	Last Year	Current-Last		
			Actual	Actual	Actual		
100 General Income							
Bank Interest	2,000.00	1,200.00	4,985.33	3,391.59	1,593.74	47%	Higher interewt acocunts
CIL Receipts (now CIL Receuots EMR)			96,342.68	62,415.16	33,927.52	54%	More building
Community Centre Car Park Income	10,000.00	7,000.00	9,014.08	9,727.00	-712.92	-7%	
Events Income			140.00	532.92	-392.92	-74%	only 1 event
Grants/S106/Donations			50.00		50.00		
Miscellaneous Income / Other	120.00	200.00	920.64	66.68	853.96	1281%	Payments from resident to cover Council of restoring a street light pole
Precept	167,390.00	160,890.00	167,390.00	160,890.00	6,500.00	4%	
Property Income	11,000.00	9,500.00	11,373.50	12,576.58	-1,203.08	-10%	
VAT Refund			13,159.68		13,159.68		0 if correct VAT recoverable
SUB TOTAL	190,510.00	178,790.00	303,375.91	249,599.93	53,775.98	22%	
200 Burial Ground Income							
WHBG Grazing & Miscellaneous Income	65.00	60.00		61.10	-61.10	-100%	Grazing stopped
WHBG Interments and Plots	16,275.00	15,500.00	27,110.00	19,786.66	7,323.34	37%	More internments
WHBG Memorials; Including Bench Donation	4,725.00	4,500.00	3,421.78	2,760.43	661.35	24%	More memorials
SUB TOTAL	21,065.00	20,060.00	30,531.78	22,608.19	7,923.59	35%	
600 Facilities							
Street Furniture inc Seats & Bins				1,322.00	-1,322.00	-100%	Crowd funded memorial bench
Utilities - Gas, Water, Electricity			2,662.16	113.92	2,548.24	2237%	Refund of Water overcharge
SUB TOTAL			2,662.16	1,435.92	1,226.24	85%	
800 EMRs - non-CIL							
Office relocation OCC Cllr Priority Fund			3,070.00		3,070.00		Grant from OCC Councillor
WHBG OCC Cllr Priority Fund 467			5,000.00		5,000.00		Grant from OCC Councillor
SUB TOTAL			8,070.00		8,070.00		
NET TOTAL	211,575.00	198,850.00	344,639.85	273,644.04	70,995.81	26%	
V.A.T.			12,331.69	13,537.09	-1,205.40	-9%	
GROSS TOTAL			356,971.54	287,181.13	69,790.41	24%	

8 June 2025 (2024-2025)

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

Cost Centre Year Comparison Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes

Code Title			Payments	Payments	Difference		Explanation
	Budgeted	Budgeted	Current Year Actual	Last Year Actual	Current-Last Actual	Percent	
300 Administration							
Office Rent	7,000.00		3,500.00		3,500.00		Moved form Cricket Pavilion to rented office
3120 Office Rent				1.00	-1.00	-100%	
Allowances, Expenses & Training	2,000.00	600.00	390.80	491.52	-100.72	-20%	
Awards and honours			1,345.94		1,345.94		Freedom of Goring x3
Election Fees		7,400.00		7,364.96	-7,364.96	-100%	No elections
Hire of Meeting Room	600.00	700.00		694.00	-694.00	-100%	No hire needed
Postage, copies, stationery and printing	1,000.00	1,000.00	400.15	504.67	-104.52	-21%	
Advertising & Publications	650.00	1,350.00	769.50	1,391.20	-621.70	-45%	
Subscriptions	1,500.00	800.00	1,824.43	317.00	1,507.43	476%	Other subscriptions moved to this code
Legal Fees	6,000.00	700.00	2,335.00		2,335.00		Advice on proprrty sale and Tennis lease
Rates and Taxes		1,800.00	1,729.04	1,572.92	156.12	10%	
Website	200.00	225.00		195.00	-195.00	-100%	
Annual Meeting of the Parish	500.00	500.00	518.47	310.10	208.37	67%	Bigger event, more publicity
SUB TOTAL	19,450.00	15,075.00	12,813.33	12,842.37	-29.04	0%	
400 General Finance and Grants							
Audit and Accountancy	1,500.00	1,000.00	2,680.00	350.00	2,330.00	666%	Unsucesfull challenge to accounts by MoP
Bank Charges	100.00	100.00	60.00	70.89	-10.89	-15%	
Miscellaneous Expenditure	200.00	500.00	20.70	236.28	-215.58	-91%	
Staff Costs	63,500.00	53,000.00	60,164.72	55,269.43	4,895.29	9%	Salary increase
Transport S26-29 LGR Act 1997	750.00	300.00	350.00	291.66	58.34	20%	
Grants under General Powers of Competence	5,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00	-4,000.00	-80%	only 1 grant
SUB TOTAL	71,080.00	54,900.00	64,275.42	61,218.26	3,057.16	5%	
500 Burial Ground Expenses							
WHBG General Maintenance	500.00	500.00	680.33	101.50	578.83	570%	more mainteence done
WHBG Mowing, Hedges, Trees	4,500.00	4,000.00	3,075.30	2,935.00	140.30	5%	
WHBG Plot Preparation	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,970.00	6,651.00	-681.00	-10%	
WHBG Waste	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,290.11	1,236.83	53.28	4%	
WHBG - Utilities	50.00		550.77		550.77		separated out from other facilities
WHBG - Staff Costs	2,500.00	1,700.00	2,640.55	1,654.29	986.26	60%	All WHBG salary now recorded in this code

WHBG subscriptions			100.00		100.00		separated out from other facilities
WHBG administration			467.85		467.85		replacement laptop
SUB TOTAL	14,050.00	12,700.00	14,774.91	12,578.62	2,196.29	17%	
600 Facilities							
Community Centre Car Park	2,500.00	2,400.00	6,503.30	3,497.49	3,005.81	86%	Increase in rent to OCC
Defibrillator	250.00	200.00	383.00	179.85	203.15	113%	More defibrillators
General Maintenance & Repair	4,000.00	4,500.00	4,775.63	4,409.12	366.51	8%	
Grass/Hedge Cutting, Weeding & Fertilising.	14,500.00	14,500.00	15,345.48	13,886.10	1,459.38	11%	
Fences/Gates	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,108.76		1,108.76		
Pedestrian Safety Projects (non EMR)	3,000.00		640.00		640.00		
Inspections Surveys & Reports	3,000.00	2,500.00	2,277.44	1,060.75	1,216.69	115%	For
Insurance	1,700.00	1,900.00	1,706.62	1,545.20	161.42	10%	
Office Equipment	1,000.00	1,000.00	963.64	66.67	896.97	1345%	New laptops and equipment for new office
Office relocation	1,000.00		4,007.25		4,007.25		Work to refurbish room for new office
Playground Equipment Maintenance	1,000.00	500.00	620.40		620.40		
Cleaning & Associated Supplies	500.00	4,500.00	103.09	198.34	-95.25	-48%	
Public Spaces Review		2,300.00		2,280.00	-2,280.00	-100%	no work in 2024-5
Security, Fire & Safety	250.00		138.34		138.34		
Software and back-ups	3,000.00	3,000.00	2,163.12	2,701.51	-538.39	-20%	
Street Furniture inc Seats & Bins	4,000.00	1,000.00	3,221.22	2,075.77	1,145.45	55%	replacement bins and signs
Street Lighting		25,000.00		24,148.52	-24,148.52	-100%	St Lighting split into 2 codes electricity and mtce/repairs
Street Lighting - maintenance / repairs	12,500.00		14,433.07		14,433.07		
Street Lighting - Electricity	12,500.00		20,705.23		20,705.23		New Electricity contract more expensive
Telephone & Internet	500.00	400.00	725.64	335.48	390.16	116%	
Tree surveys	2,000.00	2,000.00	655.00	877.00	-222.00	-25%	
Utilities - Gas, Water, Electricity	16,000.00	7,000.00	7,748.78	10,207.45	-2,458.67	-24%	Water overcharge which was recovered as a 2,662 payment see summary income
Waste / Litter / Street Cleaning	5,000.00	4,500.00	5,013.92	2,957.60	2,056.32	70%	1,200 increase in emptying bins contract fee and a late invoice
Coronation 2023 (Jubilee 2022)		250.00		209.92	-209.92	-100%	
Village Planting,Hanging Baskets & Planters	5,000.00	6,000.00	5,665.25	4,320.00	1,345.25	31%	Unpaid invoice from a previous year discovered
Christmas Trees/Lights			1,208.07		1,208.07		
SUB TOTAL	94,700.00	84,550.00	100,112.25	87,827.64	12,284.61	14%	
700 Neighbourhood Plan							
GNP evidence Website	120.00	120.00	142.10	110.40	31.70	29%	

SUB TOTAL	120.00	120.00	142.10	110.40	31.70	29%
800 EMRs - non-CIL						
Public Buildings EMR			2,820.00		2,820.00	
Street Light Replacements EMR			18,613.40	12,870.87	5,742.53	45% more spend towards changing all lanterns to LEDs
Trees EMR			2,037.50		2,037.50	
Car Park EMR			1,400.00		1,400.00	
Office relocation OCC Cllr Priority Fund			1,534.81		1,534.81	spend from new grant
GGBN Christmas Trees EMR			698.74		698.74	
Freedom of Goring EMR			440.00		440.00	
WHBG OCC Cllr Priority Fund 467			1,795.00		1,795.00	spend from new grant
SUB TOTAL			29,339.45		29,339.45	in previous FYs EMR spend was made by transfers
900 EMRs - CIL						
Pedestrian Safety Projects CIL EMR			23,188.25		23,188.25	
Playgrounds new equipment CIL EMR			2,008.69		2,008.69	
SUB TOTAL			25,196.94		25,196.94	in previous FYs EMR spend was made by transfers
NET TOTAL	199,400.00	167,345.00	246,654.40	174,577.29	72,077.11	41%
V.A.T.			28,672.68	17,901.56	10,771.12	60%
GROSS TOTAL			275,327.08	192,478.85	82,848.23	43%

Note to the 2024-5 accounts.

The AGAR figures and associated reports are as presented to our internal auditor from our accounting software.

An issue concerning reporting of VAT recoverable was identified (see Internal Auditor's report p11-12 attached). The issue arises from

- a) 2 VAT refunds (totalling £8,220.99) from HMRC in FY 2023-2024 and 3 VAT refunds (totalling £13,159.68) in FY2024-2025 that were all mistakenly entered into our accounting package as Net (instead of VAT) receipts.
- b) 1 VAT refund (£-209.12 which is negative as we owed more VAT than the refund due) that was entered into our accounting package as a Net payment.

These 6 transactions thus ended up being treated as Net instead of VAT and our accounting package then reported these VAT amounts as due to be recovered from HMRC, whereas they had already been recovered.

As FY2023-2024 had already been audited by yourselves, and FY2024-2025 by our internal auditor, we did not attempt to reopen these years to correct these entries from Net to VAT.

The table below shows in red which AGAR boxes would have changed as result, and to what and why for both FY2023-2024 (boxes 3, 6 and 7) and FY2024-2025 (boxes 1, 3, and 7).

Box No.	Description	Last Year	VAT refunds	VAT payment	Change	Last year	This Year	from last year's 7	VAT refunds	Change	This year
		£	vouchers 78 & 100	voucher 207		£ corrected					
1	Balances brought fwd	322,915.40				322,915	428,387.92	8,012		8,012	420,376
2	Annual precept	160,890.00				160,890	167,390.00				167,390
3	Total other receipts	119,330.68	8,221		8,221	111,110	177,249.85		13,160	13,160	164,090
4	Staff Costs	56,923.72				56,924	62,805.27				62,805
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0.00				0	0.00				0
6	Total other payments	117,824.44		209	209	117,615	183,849.13				183,849
7	Balances carried forward	428,387.92	8,221	-209	8,012	420,376	526,373.37	8,012	13,160	21,172	505,202
8	Total Cash and Short Term Investments	413,099.10				413,099	494,743.56				494,744
9	Total Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments	609,981.03				609,981	629,937.17				629,937
10	Total Borrowings	0.00				0	0.00				0

We will make appropriate adjustments to avoid carrying this issue further into FY2024-2025 and seek instruction from yourselves as to any actions required with respect to our FY2023-2024 and FY2024-2025 accounts.

Sarah Edmunds
Responsible Financial Officer

VAT

We note that the Council is VAT Registered: VAT No. 217 7087 01 and submits quarterly VAT returns directly from its accounting software; Scribe using the MTD (Making Tax Digital) gateway. We have noted that VAT has been properly recorded in the Scribe Cashbook in the payment documents which we have reviewed.

We have also reviewed the Q4 VAT Reclaim for the 2023-24 financial year and each quarterly VAT reclaim made during the 2024-25 financial year.

- 10.04.24 Q4 VAT reclaim received in the amount of £4,363.96
- 27.07.24 Q1 VAT reclaim received in the amount of £3,283.56
- 23.10.24 Q2 VAT reclaim received in the amount of £9,803.39
- 06.02.25 Q3 VAT reclaim received in the amount of £5,512.16
- 08.04.25 Q4 VAT reclaim submitted in the amount of £7,545.27

The total VAT recoverable for the 2024-25 financial year is (Q1 -Q4 2024-25) £26,144.38 as confirmed on the VAT returns and by the whole year VAT report with a Q4 balance of £7,545.27 of VAT Recoverable year-end debtor.

This number is not reflected, however, in the year-end Balance Sheet for the year which records a year-end reclaim amount of £31,629.81 rather than the verified £7,545.27 Q4 VAT reclaim, creating an inaccurate and unexplained variance of £24,084.54 being carried forward as a creditor for the financial year and is skewing the 'Balances carried forward' figure in Box 7 of the Annual Return.

For the avoidance of doubt, no incorrect VAT reclaims have been made against HMRC. This error is a systemic technical error which has occurred due to the way that VAT has been managed within Scribe.

I am advised by the Clerk & RFO that attempts were made to correct this issue, with Scribe Technical Support by amending prior year accounts which had been fully audited and signed off by the External Auditors. Please note that this is not the correct method as fully Audited and published accounts may not be amended.

The correct method of rectifying this issue is firstly to identify what has caused the £24,084.54 discrepancy and then to make the appropriate corrections in the current year accounts, to include any 'Restatement' of the Prior year account values. A detailed, formal explanation of all corrections being provided to the External Auditors. This matter has been discussed with the Clerk & RFO in detail.

We have noted that the Q4 VAT return in the correct amount of £7,545.27 was submitted on the 8th of April 2024. Please note that as I have discussed with the Clerk & RFO, Chairwoman and Vice-Chairman any amendment to VAT, should such be required, must be made in the current period as VAT is managed in real-time.

Conclusions

We recommend that the Clerk & RFO liaises with Scribe to correct the over statement of the 'VAT Recoverable', prior to the Accounting Statements being produced for the 2024-25 financial year, to ensure that the correct Balances are carried forward into the 2025-26 financial year, with any necessary restatement of the prior year closing balance restated.

Finally, the reasons for Scribe returning this erroneous 'VAT Recoverable' value must be identified to ensure that this situation does not arise again.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'B'






Limited Assurance: Recommendations for improvement have been made in section 9 of this report.

Internal control objective 'C'

'The authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature. We also aim to ensure that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

To meet the above objectives, we have: -

-  Noted that the Council demonstrates a reasonable and proportionate approach to both Business and Health & Safety Risk Management. The Council maintains a General Risk Register which incorporates both Business and Health & Safety Risk assessments. This Register was most recently Readopted at the 13th of May 2024 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council under Minute reference 24.01.25.4;
-  Noted that the Council Adopted its Financial Risk Register at the 10th of March 2025 Meeting of the Parish council under Minute reference 24.66.7.1;
-  Noted that the Council holds an Approved and Published Health & Safety policy which is published under the policies section on its official website;
-  Noted that the Council undertakes separate Risk Assessments for special events and each of its public facilities;
-  Examined the Council's insurance policy to ensure that appropriate cover is in place: Cover is provided under a 'Clear Cover' for Local Councils underwritten by Aviva, Policy Number: