


Council name: OLD ST. MELLONS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of electors' rights
Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015

Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended)

<p>1. Date of announcement: 17 June 2015 (a)</p> <p>2. Each year the Council's Annual Return is audited by an auditor appointed by the Auditor General for Wales. Any person interested has the opportunity to inspect and make copies of the Annual Return and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts etc. relating to the accounting statements. For the year ended 31 March 2015, these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:</p> <p>(b) _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>commencing on (c) 1 July 2015</p> <p>and ending on (d) 28 July 2015</p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than <u>14 days</u> before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address of the Clerk or other person to whom any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least <u>14 days</u> after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least <u>21 working days</u> before the date appointed for audit in (e) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be <u>20 working days</u> and (d) must be at least <u>one working day</u> before the date appointed for audit in (e) below.</p>
<p>3. Local Government Electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and • the right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the Council. <p>The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose on 31 July 2015 (e) and after that date will be available at the address given in paragraph 4 below until the audit has been completed.</p> <p>4. The audit is being conducted under the provisions of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) and the Auditor General's Code of Audit and Inspection Practice. Your audit is being carried out by:</p> <p>Mazars LLP, The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (f) <u></u></p>	<p>(e) This must be at least <u>one working day</u> after the end of the inspection period (d).</p> <p>(f) Insert name and position of person placing the notice</p>

Councils' Accounts: A Summary of Your Rights

The basic position

By law any interested person has the right to inspect a council's accounts. If you are entitled and registered to vote in community council elections then you (or your representative) also have the right to ask the appointed auditor questions about the council's accounts or challenge an item of account contained within them.

The right to inspect the accounts

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year it must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. Having given reasonable notice of your intentions, you then have 20 working days to look through the accounts and supporting documents. You will be able to make copies of the accounts and most of the relevant documents from your council. You will probably have to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts

You can only ask the appointed auditor questions about the accounts. The auditor does not have to answer questions about the council's policies, finances, procedures or anything else not related to the accounts. Your question must be about the accounts that they are auditing. The auditor does not have to say whether they think something the council has done, or an item in its accounts, is lawful or reasonable.

The right to object to the accounts

If you think that the council has spent money that they shouldn't have, or that someone has caused a loss to the council deliberately or by behaving irresponsibly, you can object to the external auditor by sending a formal 'notice of objection', **which must be in writing** to the address below, copied to the Council. You must tell the auditor why you are objecting and what you want the auditor to do about it. The auditor must reach a decision on your objection. If you are not happy with that decision, you can appeal to the courts.

You may also object if you think that there is something in the accounts that the auditor should discuss with the council or tell the public about in a 'public interest report'. Again, **you must follow the approach outlined above**. In this case, the auditor must decide whether to take any action. The auditor will normally, but does not have to, give reasons for their decision and you cannot appeal to the courts.

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your council. You should take these complaints to your council in the first instance. Most councils have their own complaints system and complaints can be sorted out, either in writing or over the phone. Occasionally there are complaints that someone else needs to deal with. For example, if you are not satisfied with the way your complaint is handled or if you have a concern about the behaviour of a council member, you should contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

What else you can do

Instead of objecting, you can give the auditor information that is relevant to their responsibilities. For example, you can simply tell the auditor if you think that something is wrong with the accounts or about waste and inefficiency in the way the council runs its services. You do not have to follow any set time limits or procedures. The auditor does not have to give you a detailed report of their investigation, but they will usually tell you the general outcome.

A final word

Councils, and so local taxpayers, must meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. When the auditor decides whether to take your objection further, one of a series of factors they must take into account includes the costs that will be involved. They will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts, you might have to pay for the action yourself.

Who should you contact?

<p>More detailed information on your rights is contained in the FREE Wales Audit Office publication Your rights in Wales: Council Accounts. This is available from the Wales Audit Office (Tel: 029 2026 0260); or can be downloaded from their website at www.wao.gov.uk. It is available in English and Welsh language versions.</p>	<p>If you wish to contact your Council's appointed external auditor please write to: Suresh Patel Mazars LLP The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads Durham, DH1 5TS</p>
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