

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

SADDLEWORTH PARISH 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 2025, that:

| | Agreed | | |
|---|--------|-----|--|
| | 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:

28/07/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

<https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk/>

Saddleworth Parish Council

Financial Year 2024-25

12 months to 31st March 2025

Notes to the Financial Statements

Annual Governance Statement

Notes to items on the Annual Governance Statement, which are listed as a “NO” :

- **Item 2** - this is ongoing and relates to advice given by the External auditor last year

“....the council did not comply with Financial Regulations with regard to VAT reclaims....”

The Parish Council (PC) has taken advice from expert VAT consultants during the Financial Year (FY) 2024-25 and is developing a partial exemption model that will be used for VAT reclaims both for prior years and going forward. As this exercise is still to be completed, it was considered prudent that no claims were made in the FY.

- **Item 5** – this is ongoing and again follows advice given by the External auditor last year

“.... no risk assessment was updated, reviewed and approved by full council during the financial year....”

During the FY, the PC has completely revised the previous Risk Assessment document which was considered not fit for purpose. Although a draft report was prepared by the early part of the calendar year, time pressures and other priorities meant that the document was not formerly approved by 31st March 2025. The new, revised document was presented and approved on Monday 28th July and will be adopted immediately.