

Explanation of variances

Name of smaller authority: **Asfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council**

County area: **Mid Suffolk**

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all **Blue** highlighted boxes

Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the **green boxes where relevant:**

• variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200);

• **New from 2020/21 onwards:** variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year;

	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses trigger below based on figures input. DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	2,873	3,003				Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	3,414	3,764	350	10.25%	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	112	44	-68	60.71%	YES	Explanation not required, difference less than £200	During Year 25/26 the VAT claim totalled only £25, with interest on reserves at £14.74 (total £19.26) however in the previous year 24/25 the VAT reclaim had been £91.19 due to the purchase of a new battery and set of pads for the defibrillator, plus a slightly higher amount of interest received of £20.57 (total £111.76) which explains the variance.
4 Staff Costs	2,110	3,386	1,276	60.47%	YES		It was brought to the Council's attention that the Clerk had not received holiday pay since starting in the role in 2019. SALC payroll advised that backdated payments could be made for the 23/24 and 24/25 years, which meant an additional lump sum of £535 was added to the Clerk's pay in March 2025 (paid at the May 2025 meeting). From 1st January 2025 the Clerk's hours were also increased from 13 to 15 hours per month and from from April 2025 the Clerk was then paid 'rolled up' holiday pay which meant an increase of £64.07 per month (£768.84 over the year) finally a lump sum of £44.10 was paid in October 2025 as backpay on the NJC settlement to 1st April 2025. These three figures together give a differential of £1347.94, which if taken off the 25/26 figures would not have triggered a request for explanation.
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		
6 All Other Payments	1,286	2,204	918	71.38%	YES		Website hosting has increased in cost from 24/25 to 25/26 by £316.99 due to the move to gov.uk domain and emails. We had three new Councillors join by co-option, so we had training costs of £237.60 against no training costs the previous year. Due to the way in which billing has fallen SALC payroll costs appear to have increased by £54 (the forthcoming year will likely be the equivalent amount lower than expected) Insurance has risen by £280.01 from 24/25 to 25/26 due to adding cyber cover on the advice of the Internal Auditor and to meet Assertion 10 requirements. Repairs & Works have increased by £41.40 across the year The above five calculations (see highlighted figures) give a differential of £930 on the payments compared year on year and explain the reason for the high variance. If this figure is taken off the 25/26 figures it would not have triggered the request for an explanation.
7 Balances Carried Forward	3,003	1,221				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	3,003	1,221				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and	2,502	2,502	0	0.00%	NO		
10 Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0.00%	NO		

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable