

Year End Accounts - a Clerk's Perspective

That's another year end accounts done and dusted for most councils, many will breathe a sigh of relief that it is over and now you can concentrate on other council matters... perhaps inducting new councillors after May elections or looking to re-open your markets and events as the COVID-19 situation improves.

Now is a great time to reflect on the year end process and how it could be made easier next time around. Review the independent audit report: were there any recommendations that could be adopted now; new processes that could be introduced; perhaps a quarterly check of the accounts by councillor to meet the requirement of internal control checks?

Year end accounts should be a breeze, and following some simple steps could make sure that the audit is nothing to be feared and closing the accounts is just another day in the office:

- Reconcile the bank accounts monthly.
- Compare budget against income and expenditure regularly and address any significant variances during the year, look to vire money from general fund or an underspent budget.
- Review those customers that owe you money longer than 6 weeks, ask the Council to make a decision about whether that local sports club is really going to pay pitch fees from 2017, maybe now is the time to write-off that debt and not carry it over to another financial year.
- Review supplier payments, make sure there are no unrepresented cheques that are carried forward from one bank reconciliation to the next.
- Reconcile the VAT, keep a running tally of VAT that you plan to reclaim from HMRC via the VAT126 form or carry out the VAT return quarterly if the Council is VAT registered.

EDGE IT Systems can help with all these things and more with the AdvantEDGE Finance module; it takes the hard work out of the accounts. The software includes all of the above features plus other useful functions such as a precept calculator, internal auditor access, and councillor read only access for those internal control checks. Use the attachment tool to keep copies of invoices against the relevant transaction and so move to a paperless management system.

The software produces the annual return and allows for easy analysis of the income and expenditure to pin-point the variances that need to be explained to the external auditor. The software and data are stored in the cloud and are accessible securely from any device with an internet connection.

With three Parish Clerks on the support team, we know how busy March-June is for you all. That's why we offer a personal service to our Finance customers with an 8 week plan that makes sure all the accounts are finalised by mid-April.

Contact us for a demo of our finance software and our 10 other modules including; Admin, Allotments, Asset Manager, Epitaph, Facilities Bookings, InspectEDGE, Markets, Planning, Playgrounds and Service Manager.

Also, we provide IT support and Microsoft 365.

Call us for a demo on **024 76 667 337**
or email **info@edgeltsystems.com**