LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

The <u>Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014</u> (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the <u>Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015</u> also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2022 for 2021/22 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The

advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- · confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- · details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the <u>Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014</u>.

A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights are available from the NAO website.

If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

Smaller authority name: St Austell Bay Parish Council

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)					
NOTICE	NOTES				
1. Date of announcement 9 June 2022 2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2022, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:	(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below				
(b) Mrs Julie Larter, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer enquiries@staustellbay-pc.gov.uk	(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts				
commencing on (c) Monday 13 June 2022 and ending on (d) Friday 22 July 2022	(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below				
Local government electors and their representatives also have: The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and	(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.				
 The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority. 					
The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.					
4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:					
PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team) 15 Westferry Circus Canary Wharf London E14 4HD (sba@pkf-l.com)					
5. This announcement is made by (e) Mrs Julie Larter, Clerk and RFO	(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority.				

smaller authority

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - · are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - · have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22

- Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 must complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
- 2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:
 - The Annual Internal Audit Report must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - Sections 1 and 2 must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - Section 3 is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
- The authority must approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both must be approved and published on the authority website/webpage before 1 July 2022.
- 4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, must return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2022. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - · the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - · a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2022
 - · an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - · notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Section1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2022 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2021/22, approved and signed, page 4
- Section 2 Accounting Statements 2021/22, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2022 authorities must publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- Section 3 External Auditor Report and Certificate
- Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22

- The authority must comply with Proper Practices in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. Proper
 Practices are found in the Practitioners' Guide* which is updated from time to time and contains everything
 needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority should receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2022.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- · The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers
 all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank
 reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting
 statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation must be provided of any difference between Box 7 and
 Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed
 accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the
 reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2021) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2022).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, must set the commencement date for the
 exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which must include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority must publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor before 1 July 2022.

Completion checkl	ist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements	Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	/	istini.
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?	VIIICH VIIICH	eus, en ambel
Internal Audit Report Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided		H Try 55	lini-i
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	S poll	ba2
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	- 12	HALL.
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2022 been reconciled to Box 8?	2. diot	boll
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	erio i	518
Sections 1 and 2 Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB : do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		omsie Theft y	eri zi seihs

*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

St Austell Bay Parish Council

www.staustellbay-pc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

	ternal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered*
Д	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	V		
	This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		<u> </u>	
<u>(</u>	This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	~		
O	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate	~	ř	
£	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	V		
μ.	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for			•
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	~	<u> </u>	
4	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carned out during the year.	7	; Venezue vezenen erek e 	
j	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	···· ·		
•	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it mot the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt			•
	The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements	V	a també apagan	Service of the servic
A	The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations	•		The particular expension contains and a second
ù 	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2020/21 AGAR	•	* *	
	(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) - The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
	any other cirk proper department in the second seco			Y

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed)

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

10/03/2022

04/05/2022

12/05/2022

Linda Coles

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

hundeles

Date

12/05/2022

[&]quot;if the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

^{**}Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed)

St Austell Bay Parish Council - Annual Internal Audit appendix to page 3 of the AGAR. Explanation of boxes marked no or not covered.

Box F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Not covered	Coverage not required. St Austell Bay Parish Council does not hold any petty cash
Вох К	If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/2020 AGAR tick "not covered"	Not covered	Coverage not required. St Austell Bay Parish Council had a limited assurance review of its 2020/2021 AGAR

Linda Coles Internal Auditor 12th May 2022

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

St Austell Bay 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 2022, that:

	Agreed			
	Yes	No*	'Yes' m	eans that this authority:
 We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. 	/			ed its accounting statements in accordance e Accounts and Audit Regulations.
We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	/		made p for safe its char	proper arrangements and accepted responsibility aguarding the public money and resources in ge.
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.	1		has onl complie	y done what it has the legal power to do and has ed with Proper Practices in doing so.
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.	1	TAU.	during t inspect	the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
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.	/		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.	
 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems. 	/	Mant	arranged for a competent person, independent of the finan controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whet internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.	
 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit. 	1	la de la constante de la const	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal an external audit.	
3. 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.	/		disclosed everything it should have about its business actividuring the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.	
 (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	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*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 :	ć
meeting of the authority on:		

19/05/2002

and recorded as minute reference:

(22/018)(b)

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

Chairman

Clerk

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Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

St Austell Bay Parish Council

	Year en	ding	Notes and guidance		
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.		
Balances brought forward	69,493	79,244	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.		
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	41,238	44,822	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.		
3. (+) Total other receipts	44,378	93,180	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.		
4. (-) Staff costs	29,598	31,446	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.		
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any)		
6. (-) All other payments	46,266	101,538	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash- book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).		
7. (=) Balances carried forward	79,244	84,262	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).		
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	79,244	84,262	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.		
Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	33,977	79,918	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.		
10. Total borrowings			The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).		
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds Yes		No N/A	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.		
(including charitable)			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.		

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities - a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being

presented to the authority for approval

approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference: (72/018)(c)

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

19/05/2022