

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

These Financial Regulations were reviewed and updated at the Parish Council meeting

On the 21st of January 2025

Key:

‘Must’ and Bold text = indicates legal requirements / statutory obligation, which a council cannot change or suspend

‘Shall’ = refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff

Purple bold = value set by Parish Council

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council’s three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council’s Code of Conduct, standing orders, and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

- 1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective, and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. **The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:**
- **To ensure that risk is appropriately managed**
 - **for the timely production of accounts;**
 - **that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;**
 - **to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and**
 - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records**
 - **identifying the duties of officers.**
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. **At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.**
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
- acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
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- produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10. **The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.**
- 1.11. **The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:**
- **entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;** and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. **The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:**
- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
 - **The outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
 - **approving accounting statements;**
 - **approving an annual governance statement;**
 - **borrowing;**
 - **writing off bad debts;**
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- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,**

shall be a matter for the full Council only.

1.14. In addition, the Council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of **£2,000**; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Chairman, or other member of the Finance Committee shall verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council.

2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.4. **The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in**

accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.

- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
 - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. Each relevant committee shall review its rolling-forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Council not later than the end of December each year including any proposals for future projects and for revising the forecast.
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- 3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than November, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committees and the Council.
- 3.3. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three year rolling-forecast (last year / current year / next year) of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.4. **The Council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year in line with the timescales set by the billing authority, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.** The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.
- 3.6. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
 - the Council for all items over **£2,000**;
 - a duly delegated committee of the Council for items **up to £2,000**;
 - the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items **up to £500**.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2. Committees are authorised to move expenditure from one area of budget class to another without the need to refer back to the Finance Committee. No expenditure (except as detailed) may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
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- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue budget, or capital budgets for completed projects, shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the Council.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually, as part of the annual budget setting process for the following financial year, and whenever pay award notices are received from NALC (for Clerk / RFO). The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of [£500]. The Clerk shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared each month and explanations of variances provided.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
 - 5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Council prior to the start of the meeting. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Council. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
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- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
 - 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council meeting.
 - 5.5. The Clerk / RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, or the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk / RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council. In such instances email approval authorising the payment (up to value of £500) must be obtained from the Chairman of the committee to which the expenditure relates to, or the Parish Council Chairman, or Vice-Chairman, or Chairman of the Management and Finance Committee. Approval required from two of above Councillors for any payments of between value of £500 and £2,000.
 - b) fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.
 - 5.6. If a discount is offered for prompt payment, and the offer date is before the next scheduled meeting of Council, where the Clerk / RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council. In such instances email approval authorising the payment (up to value of £500) must be obtained from the Chairman of the committee to which the expenditure relates to, or the Parish Council Chairman, or Vice-Chairman, or Chairman of the Management and Finance Committee. Approval required from two of above Councillors for any payments of between value of £500 and £2,000. A record of regular payments made shall be drawn up and be initialled by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
 - 5.7. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
 - 5.8. The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
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6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
 - 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
 - 6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council.
 - 6.4. Cheques for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall be signed by two members of Council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
 - 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
 - 6.6. Financial payments by bank transfer or cheque shall not normally be presented for signature/initialling other than at a main Council meeting – except in the month of August when the Council do not meet, in the event that a main Council meeting is not quorate, or in circumstances arising from a national, or local emergency. In such instances, email approval authorising the payments will be sought from all Councillors, with a minimum of five approval responses required (a quorum), one of which must be that of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Chairman of the Management & Finance Committee. Councillors will report directly back to the Clerk thereby avoiding discussion between members. A list of payment approvals obtained away from such meetings shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council
 - 6.7. Payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone, and water) and other payments as considered appropriate may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Council as made (included with the financial reports circulated with the agenda papers). A list of the direct debits payable will be provided at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, and any changes to the amount of the direct debit will be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Council. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
 - 6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
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- 6.9 If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are initialled, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.10 If thought appropriate by the Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator Please see para. 6.11 below for payment processing details)
- 6.11 . Internet banking payment processing procedures:
- a) Payments are input by the Clerk using Lloyds Bank on-line facility with a payment date 2 days after the monthly Parish Council meeting, and a printout produced which details all the payments to be made (including amounts, date to be paid, any reference, and bank account details of recipient)
 - b) All the payments on the printout are listed on the schedule provided for Councillors prior to the meeting as part of the agenda papers, and includes copies of invoices, receipts or other accompanying documentation
 - c) The 2 Councillors authorising the payments at the end of the meeting check the details on the printout against the relevant invoices etc, and initial the printout as confirmation. As the payments are not due to be paid until 2 days later, there is sufficient time for the Clerk to make any on-line amendments to the payments if a discrepancy is highlighted during the authorising process
 - d) Payments are then automatically made by Lloyds bank 2 days later
 - e) The Chair of the Finance Committee will then carry out a further check of the payments made, checking them to the bank statement, during their quarterly check of the Parish Council accounts
- 6.12 Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the Council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by both the Chairman of Council and Chairman of the Finance Committee in a sealed dated envelope annually in May/June (to include details of any other Parish Council specific passwords and log-in details). This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments. When there is a change of Parish Council or Finance Committee Chair, Clerk to request return of envelope from them, and providing the envelope has not been opened, there will be no requirement to change any of the passwords.
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- 6.13 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.14 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.15 The Council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.16 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk / RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.17 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.18 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change initialled by two authorised signatories.
- 6.19 The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk / RFO (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least annually.
- 6.20 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk / RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of **[£500]** unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. **As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation.** The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each
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payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.
- 7.7. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full Council.
 - 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
 - 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
 - 8.4. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
 - 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
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- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered, or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claims due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. A letter/email communication shall constitute placing of an order for all work, goods and services, unless a formal contract is to be prepared, or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
 - 10.2. **All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction,
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usually by obtaining three or more quotations from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.

- 10.3. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.4. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b. For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation (“the Legislation”), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

- c. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 11.1a) obtain prices as follows:
 - d. For contracts estimated to exceed [£60,000] including VAT, the Clerk shall {seek formal tenders from at least [three] suppliers agreed by [the council]}
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- e. For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- f. For contracts greater than [£3,000] excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least [3] fixed-price quotes;
- g. where the value is between [£500] and [£3,000] excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 quotes which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- h. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- i. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- j. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- k. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be submitted in writing (by post or email) addressed to the Clerk.
- l. Any invitation to tender for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services, or the execution of works issued under this regulation shall include, as a minimum, the following steps, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services, or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date, and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing (by post or email) addressed to the Clerk
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- m. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- n. Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

12. [PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)]

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STATIONERY AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1. The Clerk / RFO shall be responsible for the care and custody of stationery and equipment.
- 13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stationery at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
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- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
- 14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 16), the Clerk / RFO shall affect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
 - 15.2. The Clerk / RFO shall give prompt notification to the Council's insurers of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances
 - 15.3. The Clerk / RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
 - 15.4. The Clerk / RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
 - 15.5. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or duly delegated committee.
 - 15.6. All members, volunteers and appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable Personal Accident insurance as determined by the council.
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16. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1. **The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management**
- 16.2. The Clerk / RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually. As per the Internal Auditors recommendation this is done half yearly
- 16.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk / RFO [with the support of members] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for use during the activity.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.

Date of meeting at which any amendment to document approved	Details of amendment
19/2/19	Amendments to paras 3.2 (date changed from October to November) / 11.1b (change in limit to £10,000), 11.1e (change in procedure for tender submission), 11.1f iv (change in procedure for tender submission), 11.1g (change in limit to £10,000). Additional para 6.19 (Issue and use of debit card by Clerk)
21/4/20	Amendments to paras 4.5, 5.2, 5.5a, 5.5c, 5.6, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.9 to clarify banking arrangements, and authorisation of payments, in-part due to Covid-19
15/6/21	Amendments to paras 3.1, 3.3, 4.4, 6.7, 6.11, and 11.1c updated procurement levels
16/5/23	Amendments to paras 4.5 (Clerk authorisation in extreme cases), 6.7 (change in direct debit reporting), 11.1b, 11.1g ((change in limit to £18,000), and 11.1c updated procurement levels
21/1/25	Parish Council's document reviewed against new NALC Model document dated April 2024. Additional para added at 6.12 re turn of passwords when change of role

