

WOOTTON ST LAWRENCE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Financial Regulations provide a framework of financial controls within which the Council must operate to ensure accountability of public funds and to ensure that best value for money is achieved.
- 1.2 In larger organisations financial controls can be satisfied to some extent by the division of duties between staff. This of course is not always possible with smaller Parish Councils where the Clerk in many cases is the only employee.
- 1.3 It is therefore important that the correct procedures are followed to minimise public criticism and to comply with any legal requirements.

2. Financial Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Clerk is responsible for advising on the financial aspects of any Council policy, the financial administration of the Council and systems of financial control.
- 2.2 The Clerk of the Council will be the responsible financial officer (RFO) as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.3 The Clerk will prepare annual statements of account for the Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations currently in force.
- 2.4 The Clerk will ensure that all financial returns are submitted on time and are complete and accurate.
- 2.5 The Council's accounts, financial records, operations and systems will be subject to audit in accordance with best audit practice and current legislation in force from time to time.
- 2.6 The Clerk will supply to each member as soon as is practical after 31 March in each year a statement of the receipts and payments of the Council for the completed financial year.
- 2.7 A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis for a year to 31 March shall be supplied to each member before the end of the following month of June. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit) shall be presented to Council for formal approval before the end of June.

3. Budget Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Clerk is responsible for preparing annual estimates of expenditure and income for approval by the Council and for the management of resources within estimates.
- 3.2 The Council will approve the Precept for the coming financial year.
- 3.3 The Council is responsible for monitoring actual expenditure and income against the approved and any revised estimate. The Clerk will submit budget monitoring reports to the Council Meetings held in May, July, September, November, January and March.
- 3.4 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contracts entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available.
- 3.5 S137 Payments – donations to the Parish's organisations to be discussed and agreed when setting the Council budget.

4. Expenditure

- 4.1 The purchase of goods and services are to be obtained at the most favourable rates possible. Subject to this whenever possible the Council will use local suppliers.
- 4.2 Cheques for the payment of invoices shall be signed by two members of the Council, who will check the payee and amount on the invoice to the cheque. The two members signing the cheque will also initial the cheque stub as to correctness.
- 4.3 The Clerk will submit at each Council Meeting a schedule of invoices to be approved since the previous meeting.
- 4.4 Parish Clerk's Expenditure
The Clerk will be allowed to make small purchases to be set against the expense provision provided in the budget for the financial year. Expenditure will be recorded on a spreadsheet and will be checked bi-annually and be approved for reimbursement.

5. Contracts

- 5.1 An invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended work or service to be provided. Copies of all tenders for the same work shall be assessed by such persons as the Council may direct.
- 5.2 The Council shall decide from time to time a financial limit for work to be carried out or service provided above which tenders shall be sought.
- 5.3 The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender.

6. Income

- 6.1 The Clerk will be responsible for the despatch of timely invoices in respect of income due to the Council, the issuing of receipts and for prompt banking of monies received.
- 6.2 The Clerk will submit to each Council Meeting a schedule of income received since the previous meeting for approval.
- 6.3 The Clerk will be responsible for reclaiming VAT on a regular basis.

7. Banking

- 7.1 The Council will not use any bank account that is not in the name of the Council
- 7.2 The Council must not borrow money or have an overdraft facility except if such is specifically approved by the Council.
- 7.3 The Clerk is responsible for on-going reconciliation of the Council's bank accounts.

8. Insurance

- 8.1 The Council will consider all insurance cover and confirm its adequacy. This cover will be reviewed annually.
- 8.2 The Clerk and members of the Council have a responsibility to report to the Council should they become aware of any new risk that requires insurance or of any changes that may affect existing insurance.
- 8.3 The Clerk to ensure that the Council's Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance Certificate to be displayed on the Parish notice boards.

9. Risk Assessment

- 9.1 The Council will review at each meeting a risk assessment of its assets for purposes of identifying, assessing and managing risks faced by the Council.
- 9.2 The overall risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

10. Amendments to Financial Regulations

- 10.1 Any amendments to the Financial Regulations require the approval of the Council.

11. Suspension, Variation and Revocation of Financial Regulation

- 11.1 Any or all of the Financial Regulations (except those required by law) may be suspended by resolution of the Council on the majority vote of the members present in relation to any specific item of business.

12. Suspension, Variation and Revocation of Financial Regulation

- 12.1 Resolutions permanently to add vary or revoke a Financial Regulation shall when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.