

WILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS

GENERAL

These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of Willington Parish Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) is a Statutory Office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk of the Council will take on this role, under the policy direction of the Parish Council, and shall be responsible for the proper administration of all the Council's financial affairs.

The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

ANNUAL BUDGET

The RFO will compile estimates of income and expenditure annually for Councils consideration. The Council will review the budget not later than the end of January each year in order that the precept figure can be submitted to the Borough Council for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each member of the Parish Council with a copy of the approved budget. During the year Council the budget will be reviewed against actual income and expenditure.

The annual capital and revenue budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

BUDGETARY CONTROL

Every quarter, the RFO shall provide the Parish Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date. The quarterly schedule will be as at the end of June, September, December, and March.

The RFO may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure or it is covered by the Council's insurers, subject to a limit of £200.

Should the amount exceed the £200 ceiling, an extraordinary Council meeting must be called.

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING

All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them to and report on them to the Parish Council.

The Council will review each year and ensure that there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures in line with proper practice.

An internal auditor shall be appointed by the Parish Council. The person or body appointed will be a competent person or body independent of the Council and their task will be to review whether the systems of financial or other control are effective. The internal auditor's report is to be presented to the Council after the end of the financial year.

The external auditor shall be appointed by regulations issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

The RFO will submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor by the due date, ensuring the return is complete.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, will be made by the RFO and approved by the Parish Council.

A schedule of payments of accounts on a monthly basis shall be prepared by the RFO and together with the relevant documentation, shall be presented to the Council at their monthly meeting for approval. If the schedule is in order, it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council.

Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to above shall be signed by two Councillors.

PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS

Payments shall normally be effected by cheque, drawn on the Parish Council's bank account.

If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (e.g. telephone) may be made by Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two authorised bank signatories, a copy of the documentation is kept, and any payments are reported to Council when made.

If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two authorised bank signatories, a copy of the documentation is kept, and payments are reported to Council when made.

If thought appropriate by the Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided that the payment is approved in advance by Council. The individual releasing the payment will provide designated Council members with a copy of the bank statement as soon as the item appears on the bank statement following payment.

All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the officer issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice, the officer must be satisfied that the work, goods or services have been received, carried out, examined and approved. Duly certified invoices will be examined by the RFO in relation to arithmetical accuracy.

No Petty Cash is permitted.

CASH BOOK/BANK STATEMENT

In January, April, July, and October each year the Responsible Finance Officer will pass the cash book and bank statements to one of the designated Councillors. The designated Councillor will then check the paperwork to satisfy himself that all transactions have been made in accordance with Council approval. The Councillor will sign and date each monthly bank statement to confirm that the work has been done and an appropriate report will be made to the next Council meeting.

PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND WAGES

The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made by the RFO in accordance with the payroll records and all current legislation relating to employment law and H M Revenue and Customs requirements.

LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with the Council Policy.

All borrowings will be in the name of the Council and will not be entered into until necessary approvals have been given

INCOME

The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

All sums received on behalf of the Council shall either be handed to the RFO for banking or be banked by the officer collecting the money as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Parish Council's bank as soon as practically possible and without undue delay.

ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

The Council will, when placing orders, adopt the concept of "Best Value" in relation to the appropriateness, quality and value for money of the goods and services. An official order or letter shall be issued by the RFO for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained by the RFO. Orders for values between £500 and £2,000 will normally require two quotations. Where an order exceeds £2,000 in value the Council shall endeavour to obtain three separate quotes before deciding which supplier to accept. The Council will not be obliged to accept the lowest price.

CONTRACTS

The Council will when placing contracts adopt the concept of "Best Value" in relation to the appropriateness, quality and value for money of the goods and services to be procured. Where it is intended to enter into a contract for the supply of goods or execution of works exceeding £10,000 in value, the Council shall endeavour to obtain three separate quotes before deciding which supplier to accept. The Council will not be obliged to accept the lowest of any price offered.

INSURANCE

The RFO shall:

- a. effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- b. give prompt notification to the Council of all new risks which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- c. keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- d. be responsible for ensuring that Council undertakes an annual written risk assessment

EXPENSES – Employees and Councillors

Employees will be able to claim authorised travel and out of pocket expenses.
Councillors will be able to claim travel and out of pocket expenses for travel outside the parish, attending training or on other authorised Council work
Rates will be agreed from time-to-time by the Parish Council in line with Cheshire Association of Local Council guidelines
All claims must be made in writing in the name of the person claiming and to be signed
Records will be kept of all such payments so as to be able to satisfy H M Revenue and Customs enquiries
Receipts must be provided where appropriate

ASSETS

The RFO will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by Council and that it is reviewed on an annual basis.

REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It shall be the duty of the Council to review the financial regulations of the Council on a regular basis and at least every two years

Approved 28th July 2015