Bromham Parish Council
Financial Regulations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	**General Context**
1.1	These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Parish Council ("the Council") and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial Regulations are a key governing policy document that provides procedural guidance for Members and Officers. Financial Regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.
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 is, therefore, responsible for overall financial management arrangements, including the approval of the policy framework and budget within which the Council operates together with procedures for the virement of expenditure between budget headings.
1.4	The Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP), or Finance Portfolio Holder if appointed, is responsible for proposing variations to the financial management framework, for reviewing financial policies, and for proposing the annual budget to Council.
1.5	The Council's accounting control systems must include measures: • 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 • identifying the duties of officers. These Financial Regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
1.6	Members of the Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Financial Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Financial Regulations brings the office of Parish Councillor into disrepute.
1.7	The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is the designated Clerk to the Council.
1.8	The RFO, under the direction of the Council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs within the terms and duties defined under Section 2 of these Financial Regulations.
1.9	The Council shall periodically review the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and, as required, shall produce a statement on internal control with its Accounting Statement and Annual Governance Statement.
1.10	Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.11	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.
1.12	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 the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2.	**Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**
2.1	The RFO shall be responsible for discharging the day-to-day administration of financial matters in accordance with the approved policy framework and budgets and in doing so: • 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 • produces financial management information as required by the Council.
2.2	To prepare regular financial reports for the Council (and, if requested, the F&GP Committee or Finance Portfolio Holder if appointed by Council). These reports should cover details of receipts and payments, payroll information, budget monitoring reports and budget variances, details of investments, fund balances and other relevant current matters.
2.3	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.
2.4	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.

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<tr><td>2.5</td><td>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.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2.6</td><td>The duties of the RFO shall include, but be not limited to the following:
the production of financial management information and the ongoing monitoring of expenditure and projected income compared with approved budgets.
the preparation of draft budget estimates for reporting to Council.
the determination and submission of the precept to the Borough Council.
ensuring that all money received by the Council is banked regularly, as soon as possible after receipt, and that adequate arrangements are made for the security of cash holdings.
ensuring that all money due to the Council is billed and collected promptly.
managing cash flow and controlling investments and bank transfers.
controlling payments by cheque and by direct credit transfer.
handling the overall management of payroll in liaison with the organisation appointed to administer the payroll, including the Local Government Pension Scheme, and advising of overtime and changes as required.
ensuring the prompt submission of VAT returns and to deal with VAT inspections.
preparing and publishing the final accounts in accordance with these Financial Regulations and report thereon to Council.
producing accounts and records for external audit in accordance with these Financial Regulations.
arranging for an annual internal audit of all aspects of the Council’s financial affairs in accordance with these Financial Regulations, including the retention of supporting prime documentation to support all financial transactions.
monitoring compliance with the Council’s Financial Regulations and ensuring that the correct financial systems are in place.
managing insurance risk and ensuring that claims are processed in a timely manner. To report annually to Council on insurance risk covered and to ensure that adequate fidelity guarantee insurance is provided.
maintaining the Council’s register of property and assets.
The range of duties is more fully outlined in the relevant sections of these Financial Regulations.</td></tr>
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2.7	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); • approving accounting statements; • approving an annual governance statement; • borrowing; • writing off bad debts; • declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and • addressing recommendations in any report from the Internal or External Auditors, which shall be a matter for Full Council only.

3.	**Annual Budgets and Forward Planning**	
3.1	A revenue budget policy statement will provide an overarching financial framework for the preparation of revenue budgets and will be reviewed from time to time by the F&GP Committee (or Finance Portfolio Holder if appointed) and approved by Council.	
3.2	The RFO must each year, in line with an agreed budget preparation timetable, 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 F&GP committee and the Council and these estimates shall include allocations to different services and functions, the proposed precept level and level of contingency funds.	
3.3	The F&GP Committee, or Finance Portfolio Holder, shall review the estimates and having regard to the RFO advice submit a final budget to Council in December each year and shall recommend the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each Member with a copy of the approved estimates.	
3.4	Each Committee (or Portfolio Holders if appointed) is responsible for ensuring, in respect of services falling within the remit of the Committee (or Portfolio), that:	
	(a)	Draft revenue budget requirements shall be formulated in accordance with the required format and timetable and having regard to spending patterns and pressures revealed through the budget monitoring process, legal requirements, initiatives already under way and relevant cash limits;
	(b)	Budget proposals, determined in (a) above, shall be submitted to the F&GP Committee or Finance Portfolio Holder (if appointed) in the cycle of meetings immediately before the December Council meeting in each year;
	(c)	Effective monitoring of the budget shall take place to ensure that spending remains within the overall cash limit, that individual budget heads are not overspent, and that appropriate corrective action is taken when variations from the approved budget are forecast.
3.5	The Council shall consider annual budget proposals for key services in relation to a three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments, including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding, and shall update the forecast accordingly.	

3.6	The Council shall fix the Precept (Council Tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council Tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year, but usually at the December meeting. The RFO shall issue the Precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
3.7	The approved annual budgets shall form the basis of regular financial monitoring and budgetary control for the ensuing financial year.

4.	**Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend**
4.1	Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in each approved Committee or Portfolio budget subject to satisfaction of the provisions of Financial Regulations 7, 11 and 12. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these Financial Regulations.
4.2	No expenditure may be authorised or incurred 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’).
4.3	The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date and shall regularly submit reports of income and expenditure to date against each head of the approved annual budget and shall, as part of this process, effectively monitor variances. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, “material” shall be in excess of 15% of the budget.
4.4	In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the RFO may authorise and incur revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes any repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any specific budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000. The RFO shall report the action to the Chairperson as soon as possible and to Council, the appropriate Committee, and relevant Portfolio Holder if appointed, as soon as practicable thereafter.
4.5	Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 4.4 above, and the sum required cannot be met from savings made elsewhere within the Committee’s approved budget, it shall be met from contingency sums held by the Council.
4.6	Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.
4.7	The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually, ordinarily each October, for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform Committees or Portfolio Holders of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.8	The Council is responsible for approving the virement of expenditure between budget headings and for allocating the contingency sum and for reflecting these decisions in the Council's revenue budget. The Clerk may, with the approval of Council, vire between sub-heads.
4.9	Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. The F&GP Committee, or Finance Portfolio Holder if appointed, shall determine and propose to the Council, at the end of each financial year, what unspent balances may be carried forward into existing budgets and detail those which shall be added to Council Reserves.
4.10	No expenditure shall be authorised or incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council or Committee concerned is satisfied that it is contained in an approved capital work programme or by a resolution of Council, and furthermore that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained, or reserves are earmarked for this purpose.
4.11	No unbudgeted capital expenditure shall be incurred during the financial year in anticipation of a surplus at the financial year end.
4.12	All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations relating to contracts.

5.	**Accounting and Auditing**
5.1	All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as may be varied from time to time), appropriate guidance and proper practices.
5.2	The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual governance statement, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the External Auditor appointed from time to time) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and, having certified the accounts, shall submit the financial statements and Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended from time to time).
5.3	The RFO 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 Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as may be varied from time to time) and 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.
5.4	The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by the Council and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.

5.5	The RFO will be responsible for ensuring that the Internal Auditor carries out the internal audit of the Council's accounts, with a view to the satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditors Report section of the Annual Return as submitted annually by the External Auditor. The internal audit shall be carried out on a yearly basis at the end of the financial year and the RFO shall report to the FGP Committee or Finance Portfolio Holder (if appointed), and to Council as soon thereafter on the internal auditor findings.
5.6	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
5.7	The Internal Auditor and External Auditor 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.
5.8	For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to the Internal Audit process, the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
5.9	The RFO shall make arrangements for the publication of the annual accounts, and the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books and vouchers as required by the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended from time to time). This should include of the activities of the Council and a report on how income and expenditure was received or incurred in the previous financial year.
5.10	The RFO shall, as soon as practicable and without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report of the Internal and External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

6.	**Banking Arrangements and Payment Authorisation**
6.1	The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency and any changes to standard practice must be approved by the Council. Banking arrangements may not be delegated to a Committee.
6.2	A schedule of payments requiring authorisation shall be prepared by the RFO and regularly presented to the Council, or to a Committee with delegated budgetary responsibilities, for approval. If, following review for compliance, payment shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council or that Committee and a detailed list of payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payments were authorised.

6.3	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.	
6.4	The Clerk and 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, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, and where the RFO can certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or FGP Committee.
	(b)	An expenditure item authorised under a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or FGP Committee].
	(c)	Fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £20,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or FGP Committee].
6.5	Cheques and authorisations for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall require two signatures from the authorised signature list approved by the Council. 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.	
6.6	To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.	

7.	**Payment of Accounts**
7.1	In accordance with approved Standing Orders of the Council, all orders involving payment shall be authorised by resolution of the Council or, where the Council has delegated budgetary responsibility for the expenditure to a Committee and the payment does not exceed ten per cent (10%) of the Council's total annual precept, by resolution of that Committee.
7.2	Other than incurred expense payments made by the Clerk, all payments shall be effected by cheque or by direct credit transfer from the Council's current account. All cheques issued for payments must be signed by two Councillors in accordance with these Financial Regulations (see 6.5 above).
7.3	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, properly carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.

7.4	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 [or FGP Committee] meeting and, wherever possible, within thirty days of their receipt or earlier if a discount for early settlement is available.
7.5	For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Council [or a duly authorised Committee] may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of Financial Regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or FGP Committee].
7.6	In respect of grants a duly authorised Committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.
7.7	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.
7.8	If thought appropriate by Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates 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.
7.9	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 signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made.
7.10	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.
7.11	Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the 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.
7.12	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.

7.13	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 which is retained on file for audit checks.	
7.14	Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by Council or FGP committee in writing before any order is placed.	
7.15	Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.	
7.16	The RFO can and may authorise members of staff, for the purpose of carrying out their duties, to incur expenses if the Council cannot be invoiced direct. Vouchers for expenses must be properly submitted to the RFO for reimbursement so that they are entered on the schedule referred to in 6.2 above.	
7.17	The RFO can determine whether or not to operate a petty cash system. If the RFO chooses to operate a petty cash system, the value of such holding must be approved by the Council and the RFO must:	
	(a)	obtain and retain vouchers to support each payment from the imprest account and, where appropriate, an official receipted VAT invoice must be obtained;
	(b)	make adequate arrangements for the safe custody of the account;
	(c)	produce upon demand cash and all vouchers to the total value of the imprest amount;
	(d)	record transactions promptly;
	(e)	provide a certificate of the value of the account held at 31 March each year or at any other time if so requested;
	(f)	ensure that the float is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans and that the only payments into the account are the reimbursement of the float and change relating to purchases where an advance has been made;
	(g)	ensure that on leaving the employment of the Council or otherwise ceasing to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, the amount advanced to him or her shall be accounted for. The amount advanced shall be either repaid or transferred to another authorised member of staff as evidenced by the signature of the receiving officer.
7.18	Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these Financial Regulations.	
7.19	Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown on the schedules of the payment of money presented to the Council referred to in 6.2 above.	

8.	**Payment of Salaries and Wages**	
8.1	The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made by the organisation appointed to administer the payroll in accordance with the payroll details supplied by the RFO which have been approved by the Council.	
8.2	The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with the National Salary Scales and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries rates shall be as agreed by Council.	
8.3	All time sheets shall be certified for accuracy by the RFO.	
8.4	Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for income 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. The payroll totals, including payments to Inland Revenue, National Insurance and Pension contributions, shall be detailed on the schedule presented to Council referred to in 6.2 above.	
8.5	No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of Council.	
8.6	Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions paid on behalf of the employee shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:	
	(a)	by any Parish Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know.
	(b)	by the Internal Auditor.
	(c)	by the External Auditor.
	(d)	by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
8.7	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.	
8.8	An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.	
8.9	Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.	
8.10	Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.	

9.	**Loans and Investments**
9.1	All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO on behalf of the Council and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with Council Policy. Proposed changes to loans and investments must be reported to Council at the earliest opportunity for approval.
9.2	All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
9.3	All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the safe custody of the RFO.
9.4	All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval (if relevant). 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.
9.5	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 Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
9.6	The Council will arrange with the Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the RFO.
9.7	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 Regulations 6 and 7.
9.8	The Council shall consider the need for a Treasury Management Policy or Investment Strategy 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.

10.	**Income**
10.1	The collection of sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO and at least two employees should, wherever possible, be present when post is opened so that money received by post is properly identified and recorded.
10.2	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, and ordinarily invoices should be despatched within 14 days of debts arising.
10.3	The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually.

10.4	The recovery of debts shall be rigorously pursued except that legal proceedings shall not be instigated without the express authority of the Council. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts, shall be reported to Council and written off in the year.
10.5	All sums received on behalf of the Council shall either be paid 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 Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary and all income received should be locked away pending banking to safeguard against loss or theft.
10.6	The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
10.7	All receipts, tickets or other records of income should be held securely for the appropriate period and a reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on receipts records held by the RFO.
10.8	Income received should not be used to cash personal cheques or other payments.
10.9	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.
10.10	The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim, due in accordance with the relevant VAT Act (as amended from time to time), shall be made at least annually coinciding with financial year end.

11.	**Orders for Works, Goods and Services**
11.1	An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate i.e. petty cash purchases. Copies of orders shall be retained.
11.2	Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
11.3	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. Where it is the intention to enter into an official order exceeding £5,000, for the supply of goods or materials or for execution of works, the RFO shall endeavour to obtain at least three written quotations in accordance with approved procedures. A Parish Councillor may not issue an official order or make any contractual commitment on behalf of the Council.
11.4	Any official orders which are given verbally must be confirmed by written order as soon as possible thereafter.
11.5	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.

12.	**Contracts**	
12.1	The RFO, in consultation with the Chairperson and/or appropriate Committee Chairman, may incur expenditure on operational or any new works or for the supply of goods not previously supplied, costing up to £5,000, provided such expenditure is within the overall budget of the Council.	
12.2	Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (a) to (f) below:	
	(a)	for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
	(b)	for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
	(c)	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;
	(d)	for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
	(e)	for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council); and
	(f)	for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
12.3	Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £5,000, but not exceeding £25,000 in value for the supply of goods, materials or services or for the execution of works, the RFO shall invite not less than three quotations which must be submitted in sealed envelopes endorsed "Quotation for…." followed by the subject, and addressed to the Clerk to the Council. The RFO shall hold the quotations in a secure place until the time appointed for opening when they will be opened in the presence of a Member of the Council and the RFO shall prepare a list for submission to the appropriate Committee or Council meeting.	
12.4	Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £25,000 in value, then a notice shall be placed in a newspaper circulating in the area, or a relevant trade paper, inviting firms to express an interest in being included in the list from which tenders will be invited. The RFO will then report to the Council or appropriate Committee giving details of all responses received, together with any other recommendations of firms which should be included in the list from which tenders will be invited. The procedure for inviting and receiving tenders shall be the same as in 12.3 above.	
12.5	The Council and its Committees are not bound to accept the lowest or any tender but a file note with reasons should be prepared by the RFO in the event that the lowest tender is not accepted.	

12.6	If no tenders are received, or if all tenders are identical, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods, material or services or for executing the works.
12.7	No exception from complying with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of any contract shall be made otherwise than by the direction of the Council or, in an emergency, by the Committee or Portfolio Holder to which expenditure power has been delegated. Where Financial Regulations relating to contracts are waived to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to Council.
12.8	Every exception made by a Committee or Portfolio Holder shall be reported to the Council at its next ordinary meeting specifying the nature of the emergency justifying the exception.
12.9	Where the Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations.

13.	**Payments under Contracts for Building or other Construction Work**
13.1	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.
13.2	Where contracts provide for payment by instalments, the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding fluctuation clauses, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, a report shall be submitted to Council and/or the appropriate Committee.
13.3	Any variation to a contract, addition or omission from a contract must be approved by the RFO in writing, the appropriate Committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

14.	**Stores and Equipment**
14.1	Delivery notes should ordinarily be obtained in respect of all goods received and goods should, wherever possible, be checked as regard quality and quantity at the time delivery is made.
14.2	Stocks shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
14.3	The RFO is responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place for the control of stores and equipment and for arranging the annual check in terms of value and quantity of all such stores and equipment.
14.4	Attractive and portable items of equipment (e.g. computers, cameras and video recorders) shall be identified with security markings as belonging to the Council.

15.	**Asset Management and Security**
15.1	The RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties owned or held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned or 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 Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as may be varied from time to time).
15.2	The RFO is responsible for establishing arrangements for the proper security of all buildings and other assets belonging to the Council and for ensuring that no asset is subject to personal use by an employee without proper authority.
15.3	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, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £1,000. In each case above the limit a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
15.4	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, and all disposals of assets should be on terms aimed at achieving best value. 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.
15.5	No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the 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.
15.6	The RFO is responsible for maintaining an asset register and inventory in order to ensure that assets are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked and insured which should provide assurance that assets are safeguarded, used efficiently and effectively and being adequately maintained. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a safety inspection of assets.
15.7	Where access to a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to Council records on that computer, the PIN and Passwords should be held securely and subject to regular change.
15.8	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.
15.9	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.

16.	**Insurance**
16.1	The RFO shall be responsible for effecting all insurances covering the Council's risks and negotiating all claims on the Council's insurers.
16.2	Members of staff and, as appropriate, Parish Councillors shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
16.3	The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances affected by Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
16.4	The 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.
16.5	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.

17.	**Risk Management**
17.1	The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The RFO shall prepare and promote risk management arrangements in respect of all activities of the Council, including risk assessments. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be regularly reviewed by the Council, relevant Committee or Portfolio Holder.
17.2	When considering any new activity, the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council or relevant Committee or Portfolio Holder.

18.	**Publication of Information**
18.1	The RFO shall ensure compliance with the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015/494 as amended from time to time by publishing relevant information on the Parish Council website. This shall include; all items of expenditure above £100; end of year accounts; Annual Governance Statement; internal audit reports; list of Councillor responsibilities; list of assets; meeting agendas and minutes.

19.	**Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations**
19.1	It shall be the duty of the F&GP Committee, or Finance Portfolio Holder if appointed, to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time and to make such recommendations for amendment to the Council as the Committee or Finance Portfolio Holder considers are required.
19.2	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.

19.3	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.

Adopted by:	Parish Council
Date:	5 May 2026
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