



CHERINGTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

MAY 2023

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. 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 financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's function, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These financial regulations are designed to demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the council. [The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for Cherington Parish Council, and these regulations will apply accordingly.] The Clerk, acting under the policy direction of the Council, shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices. The Clerk shall determine on behalf of the Council its accounting records, and accounting control systems. The Clerk shall ensure that the accounting control systems are observed and that the accounting records of the Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.3 The Clerk shall produce financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.4 At least once a year, prior to approving the annual return, the council shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.5 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations shall mean the Regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force.
- 1.6 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in Governance and Accountability in local Councils in England and Wales - a Practitioners' Guide which is published jointly by NALC and SLCC and updated from time to time.

2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET)

- 2.1 Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the year shall be prepared each year by the Clerk in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.

- 2.2 The Council shall review the budget not later than the end of January each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Clerk shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.
- 2.3 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.
- 2.4 The Council shall consider the need for and shall have regard to a three-year forecast of Revenue and Capital Receipts and payments which may be prepared at the same time as the annual Budget.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.
- 3.2 The Clerk 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 there is a budgetary provision for the expenditure or not, subject to a limit of £200. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.3 No expenditure shall be incurred 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, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the Clerk in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.2 The Clerk shall complete the annual financial statements of the Council, including the Council's annual return, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The Clerk shall complete the Accounts of the council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the Auditor appointed from time to time by the Audit Commission) and shall submit the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.4 An independent Internal Auditor will be appointed each year to provide the Internal Audit report for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 4.5 The Clerk shall make arrangements for the opportunity for public inspection of accounts, books and vouchers. The Public Inspection Period must by law include the first 10 working days of July each year. The Clerk is also responsible for the display or publication of any Notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.6 The Clerk shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, shall be made by the Clerk and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 A schedule of payments required, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, shall be prepared by the Clerk and together with the relevant invoices, be presented to Council.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4, shall be signed by two members of Council, or by a council member and the Clerk.
- 5.4 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.

6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The Clerk shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.
- 6.4 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, where the Clerk certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the Clerk may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the appropriate meeting of Council.
- 6.5 The Council will not maintain any form of cash float.

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 salaries shall be as agreed by the Council.

Payment of salaries and payment of deductions &om salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.2 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

9. INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk.
- 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 Clerk - and the Clerk shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges 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 Clerk. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the Clerk 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 Clerk shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1944 section 33 shall be made at least annually.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 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. Copies of orders to 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.
- 10.3 The Clerk 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 Clerk 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. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 11.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The Clerk shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned 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.

- 11.2 No property shall be 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 £50.
- 11.3 The Clerk 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, possible in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

12. INSURANCE

- 12.1 Following the annual risk assessment the Clerk shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 12.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the Council of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 12.3 The Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 12.4 The Clerk 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.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 13.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk 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 annually.
- 13.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

14. REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 14.1 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.

These Financial Regulations incorporate variations introduced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in July 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations.