



## **BEWERLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **STANDING ORDER № 2 - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

#### **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council.
- 1.2 The Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), under the policy direction of the Council, and shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's affairs, ensuring that financial proprieties are observed in the management of the Council's finances and the production of financial management information, and for ensuring that the Council is appropriately insured.
- 1.3 The Council will appoint a Finance Committee (FC) which will provide an adequate system of internal audit of the Council's accounting and financial operations.

#### **2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES**

- 2.1 The FC of the Council shall formulate and submit budget proposals to the full Council for the following financial year not later than the end of December each year.
- 2.2 The Council shall review the budget proposals not later than the end of December each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The precept request will normally be submitted to the Principal Authority in January each year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.

#### **3. BUDGETARY CONTROL**

- 3.1 All expenditure by the Parish Council is to be authorised by a quorum of three Councillors, a quorum being at least one third of elected Councillors.
- 3.2 The Councillors and the Clerk are entitled to claim mileage allowance for any extra journeys undertaken outside the parish, when representing the Council or the Parish at meetings or functions. The rate of mileage allowance will be approved annually and recorded in Council minutes.
- 3.3 The RFO shall provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date at each of its regular monthly meetings and will regularly check the finances against the budget.
- 3.4 In an emergency, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and the Deputy Chair, may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council. There is an absolute limit on such emergency expenditure of £500. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

#### **4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT**

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be as required by the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.
- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Council's accounts and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by Auditor.
- 4.3 An independent Internal Auditor will be appointed by the Council with a view to the completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return, as required by the Audit Commission.
- 4.4 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books and vouchers, as required by the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

#### **5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO, approved by the Council and regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO. The RFO or a nominated Councillor shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 5.3 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 (e.g. postage or minor stationery items) shall be reclaimed as Clerk's expenses.
- 5.4 All payments shall be made by cheque or by internet transfer in accordance with a resolution of the Council.
- 5.5 The Council shall appoint four signatories to cheques who shall be three councillors and the Clerk. Their names to be recorded in the Minutes. At least one councillor and the Clerk will be authorised to make internet payments on the bank account.
- 5.6 Cheques shall be signed by any two of the signatories, who should initial the cheque counterfoil to confirm that the details shown on the cheque, the counterfoil and the invoice are the same.
- 5.7 If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction.
- 5.8 Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council or committee meeting or after such a meeting. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

- 5.9 The council will normally make and receive payments using the bank's internet banking facility. The following internal control procedures will be applied to internet banking payments:
- 5.9.1 a schedule of invoices for payment will be presented at a council meeting, usually on the agenda, and supported by the relevant documentation;
  - 5.9.2 following a supporting resolution to make the payments by the council, a councillor, usually the Chair, will sign each invoice to authorise payment. The names of those proposing that the payments be made and, if not the Chair, of the councillor endorsing the invoices will be recorded in the minutes;
  - 5.9.3 after the meeting, the Clerk will make the electronic payments using the internet banking system;
  - 5.9.4 immediately after processing the payments, the Clerk will email a screenshot of the banking screen showing confirmation of the payments and of the payee details to the Chair and to a member of the finance committee;
  - 5.9.5 at the next meeting, a member of the finance committee will cross check the transactions on the bank statement presented to the meeting against the invoices authorised at the preceding meeting to ensure that only those payments authorised by the council have, in fact, been paid. This will be recorded in the minutes.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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 with the location of storage being agreed by the finance committee.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk and RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify two councillors, along with the Clerk, who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the maximum value of payments that can be instructed by the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of additional approvals.
- 5.14 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page, and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Any computer used to access the council's bank account must be password protected and encrypted, and access to saved passwords on the computer must be similarly password protected. All passwords should meet the standards recommended by the National Cyber Security Centre.

## **6 PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

- 6.1 The payment of the Clerk's salary shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating; the salary shall be agreed by the Council and reviewed annually by the Personnel Working Group.

## **7 INVESTMENTS**

- 7.1 All investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy and noted in the minutes at a full council meeting.

## **8 INCOME**

- 8.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 8.2 The Council will review all fees and charges following a report from the RFO at least annually and when occasion demands.
- 8.3 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 8.4 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT return that is required and is responsible for reclaiming any VAT paid.
- 8.5 Where possible, when any significant sums of cash are received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted.

## **9 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOOD AND SERVICES**

- 9.1 An official order or letter shall be issued by the RFO for all work, goods and services.
- 9.2 All Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.

## **10 CONTRACTS**

- 10.1 Unless it is deemed inappropriate, a minimum of three competitive tenders will be sought for any contract expected to cost more than £500. A written specification is to be sent to prospective tenderers who are to be advised of the closing date and to whom their sealed bid is to be sent.
- 10.2 Completed tenders will be opened either at the full Council or in a sub-committee or working group, with at least a quorum present. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest, or any, tender. If fewer than three tenders are received, or if any are identical, the Council may make arrangements as it deems appropriate. The Council reserves the right to publish the cost of the winning tender.

## **11 PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 11.1 The RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council.

## **12 INSURANCE**

- 12.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 12.2 The Clerk and Councillors shall be included in any fidelity guarantee insurance.

## **13 CHARITIES**

- 13.1 The RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept for funds held by charities affiliated to the Council, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity law or any governing document.

*It is noted that, at the time of this amendment no 9, Bewerley Parish Council did not hold such funds.*

#### **14 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 14.1 The FC shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council

#### **15 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 15.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations from time to time.

Issue No.9 of Standing Order No 2 was approved by the Parish Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022