

# **BUSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

### **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of Busbridge Parish Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the whole Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), the Clerk, under the policy direction of the Council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's affairs.
- 1.3 The Clerk shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

### **2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES**

- 2.1 Each Committee and Working Party/Group shall formulate and submit proposals to the Parish Council, in respect of revenue and capital costs for the following financial year not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the year shall be prepared each year by the Clerk.
- 2.3 The Parish shall review the estimates not later than the end of December each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Clerk shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.4 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### **3 BUDGETARY CONTROL**

- 3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget without prior approval.
- 3.3 The Clerk shall as necessary provide the Parish Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date, comparing actual expenditure against that planned.
- 3.4.i 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 or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report the action to the Parish Council through the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.4.ii The Clerk may incur routine expenditure for the repair or replacement of an asset provided the cost thereof does not exceed £100.00.
- 3.5 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Parish Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

- 3.6 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Parish Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

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

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Parish Council shall be determined by the Clerk as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 4.2 The Clerk shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Parish Council.
- 4.3 The Clerk shall be responsible for completing 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 for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended, or set by the Auditor.
- 4.4 The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Parish Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Parish Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the Clerk or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the Clerk or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.5 The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the Clerk, or by the Parish Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return as compiled annually by the Audit Commission. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Parish Council, shall report to the Parish Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.
- 4.6 The Clerk shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers required by Audit Commission Act 1998 section 15 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 4.7 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 shall be made by the Clerk and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 A schedule of the 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 the appropriate committee. If the schedule is in

order it shall be initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. The detail may be shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.

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.

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 and invoices.

## **6 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Parish 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 the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

6.3 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/ RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the Clerk may with the permission of the Chairman (notwithstanding para 6.3) 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.

## **7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

7.1 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 Parish Council.

## **8 TRAVELLING SUBSISTENCE AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES – EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

8.1 The payment to employees and members of the Council of travelling and subsistence should be in accordance with the National Joint Council code.

8.2 All claims for payment of subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses shall be submitted, duly certified. Certification shall mean that the certifying officer is satisfied that the journeys were authorised and that the expenses were properly and necessarily incurred and properly payable by the Parish Council.

## **9 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS**

9.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Parish Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with the Parish Council's policy.

- 9.2 The Parish Council's Investment Policy, shall be in accordance with the Trustee Act 2000, and shall be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually.
- 9.3 All investments of money under the control of the Parish Council shall be in the name of the Parish Council.
- 9.4 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Parish Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Parish Council as to terms and purpose.
- 9.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

## **10 INCOME**

- 10.1 The collection of all sums due to the Parish Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk.
- 10.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Parish Council, notified to the Clerk who shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Parish Council.
- 10.3 The Parish Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 10.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Parish Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 10.5 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 Parish Council's bankers with such frequency as the Clerk considers necessary.
- 10.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 10.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 10.8 The Clerk shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 10.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Parish Council, the Clerk shall take such steps as are agreed by the Parish 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.

## **11 ORDERS FOR WORK, 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. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 11.2 Order books shall be controlled by the Clerk.

- 11.3 All members and the Clerk are responsible for obtaining value for money as all times. The Clerk, before issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11 (I) below.
- 11.4 The Clerk shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.

## **12 CONTRACTS**

- 12.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- (a) 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 (i) to (vi) below:
    - (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
    - (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
    - (iii) 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;
    - (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
    - (v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the appropriate committee);
    - (vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
  - (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least five firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
  - (c) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Parish Council.
  - (d) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and

remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

- (f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of the Parish Council.
- (g) If less than five tenders are received for contracts above £50,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Parish Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (h) When it is to enter into a contract less than £50,000 and above £35,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £500] the Clerk shall strive to obtain 2 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.
- (i) The Parish Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

### **13. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

- 13.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the Clerk upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 13.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Parish Council.
- 13.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

### **14 STORES AND EQUIPMENT**

- 14.1 The Clerk shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 14.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 14.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

### **15 PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 15.1 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 Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 15.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law.

## **16 INSURANCE**

- 16.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the Clerk/RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 16.2 The Clerk/RFO shall give prompt notification to the Members of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 16.3 The Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances affected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 16.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Parish Council.

## **18 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 18.1 The Clerk shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Parish Council, as directed by the appropriate Committee.
- 18.2 When considering any new activity the Clerk shall prepare a draft Risk Management policy for the activity and shall bring a draft addressing the legal and financial liabilities and Risk Management issues that arise to Parish Council for consideration and, if thought appropriate, adoption.

## **19 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 19.1 It shall be the duty of the Parish Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Parish Council annually.