

**AVETON GIFFORD PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
REVIEWED AND AMENDED AUGUST 2020**

1. General

- 1.1 In the event that the Council does not appoint a Finance Committee (F&GP), references to this committee in this document shall read as the Council.
- 1.2 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.3 The responsible financial officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Finance Committee shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, if there is no other nominee the RFO shall be the clerk.
- 1.4 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2. Annual Estimates

- 2.1 Each committee shall formulate and submit proposals to the Council in respect of revenue services and capital projects for inclusion in the rolling capital programme not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payments on capital account, shall be prepared each year by the RFO.
- 2.3 The Council shall review the estimates not later than the end of January in 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.
- 2.4 The annual capital and revenue budgets shall control for the ensuing year.

3. Budgetary Control

- 3.1 Expenditure on the revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate budget unless a virement has been approved by the Council.
- 3.3 The RFO shall periodically provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the approved annual budget.
- 3.4 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 Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 3.4 above and the sum required cannot be met from savings made elsewhere within the Council's approved budget, it shall be subject to the provisions of a supplementary estimate approved by the Council.
- 3.7 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that it is in the budget and that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.
- 3.8 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. Accounting and Audit

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.
- 4.2 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 thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The following principles shall be observed in connection with accounting duties.
 - 4.3.1 The duty of providing information, calculating, checking and recording sums due to, or from, the Council, should be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or dispersing them.
 - 4.3.2 Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions should not be engaged in any of those transactions.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO requires, make available such documents of the Council which relate to their accounting and other records as appear to the RFO to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the RFO with such information and explanation as the RFO considers necessary for that purpose.

5. Banking Arrangements and Cheques

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- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. Two accounts shall be maintained at the bank, a current account and a deposit account .
- 5.2 The Clerk will report to each meeting of the Council payments to be made and if approved the payments will be set out in the minutes of the meeting.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the account in shall be signed by two of the authorised signatories. The clerk shall not be a signatory.
- 5.4 Payments may be made by electronic banking if they have been authorised at a meeting of the Council and subsequently minuted.

6. Payment of Accounts

- 6.1 Payments shall be effected by electronic means, cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 Invoices for payment shall be verified and certified by the officer issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice the officer shall satisfy himself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 Certified invoices shall be passed to the RFO who shall check them in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation, and shall code them to the appropriate expenditure head. He shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt.
- 6.4 When the RFO is satisfied that invoices are in order he shall pass them to the Clerk for final certification.
- 6.5 All duly certified invoices will then be entered into the minutes of the next Council meeting.
- 6.6 Officers incurring expenses shall make a claim for reimbursement.

7. Payment of Salaries

- 7.1 The payment of salaries shall be made by the RFO from bank account in accordance with the payroll records and will be subject to deduction of tax and National Insurance

8. Loans and Investments

- 8.1 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 Council policy. Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the F&GP committee at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.2 Investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.3 Borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council.
- 8.4 Investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9. Income

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be ultimately 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 Bad debts shall be reported to the F&GP committee.
- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 A reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque or credit , shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

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 e.g. petty cash purchases. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3 Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer 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.

11. Contracts

- 11.1 Procedures as to the contract are laid down in the Council's standing orders as follows:
- 11.2 Every contract whether made by the Council or by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these standing orders, and no exception shall be

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made otherwise than by direction of the Council or in an emergency by such a committee as aforesaid provided that these standing orders shall not apply to contracts which relate to items 11.2 for:-

- 11.2.1 the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services
 - 11.2.2 specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants
 - 11.2.3 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
 - 11.2.4 work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council
 - 11.2.5 goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or which are sold only at a fixed price.
- 11.3 Where it is intended to enter into a contract:
- 11.3.1 exceeding £1,000 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 11.2 the clerk shall invite tenders from at least two suppliers but ideally three, where appropriate contractors can be identified.
 - 11.3.2 for expenditure of £999 or less in value the chairman of the spending committee or his appointed vice chairman together with the clerk or the duly authorised deputy shall have executive power.
- 11.4 When applications are made to waive standing orders relating to contracts to enable a tender to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- 11.5 Every exception made by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall be reported to the Council and the report shall specify the emergency by which the exception shall have been justified.
- 11.6 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 and the last date by which such tenders should reach the clerk in the ordinary course of post.
- 11.7 Tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the clerk or the properly authorised deputy in the presence of at least one member of the Council
- 11.8 If less than three tenders are received for contracts valued above £1,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- 11.9 The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender.
- 12. Payments under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works**
- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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 the appropriate committee.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the clerk in writing, the appropriate committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.
- 13. Stores and Equipment**
- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store and goods must be checked as regard quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for an annual check of all stocks and stores.
- 14. Properties and Estates**
- 14.1 The clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the

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- interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, save where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500.

15, Insurance

- 15.1 The RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 15.2 All new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances shall be advised to the RFO.
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim.

16. Revision of Financial Regulations

- 16.1 It shall be the duty of the F&GP committee to review the financial regulations of the Council from time to time and to make such recommendations to the Council as the committee considers are required.

Internal monitoring of financial procedures

Councils must ensure proper conduct of financial affairs and show that public money has been used for the purpose intended. This is achieved by submitting an annual return to the external auditor who will review compliance with the requirements of the return. The auditor will ask for explanations on matters raised by the return. If no satisfactory explanation can be given then the external auditor is able to impose sanctions.

The role of the internal auditor

A Council must appoint an internal auditor. The internal auditor cannot be a member of the Council or an employee and is independent of the Council. His role is the completion of the annual return submitted to the Audit Commission and includes: -

- Transfer of financial data from accounting records onto the return section 1: statement of accounts;
- Completing section 2: the statement of assurance and
- Signing section 4: report on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's controls.

Internal controls of Aveton Gifford Parish Council

- Cheques are signed by two Councillors, the clerk is not a signatory
- Every invoice for payment is signed by the chairman as approved for payment
- Payments are approved each month at Council meetings and minuted
- The Clerk presents monthly a reconciliation of the bank account to the cash book
- The Clerk reports account balances each month