

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL CONTROLS MAY 2019

GENERAL

The Parish Council approved Financial Regs and Standing Orders in March 2018.

ACTION: To be reapproved at each Annual Meeting of the Council and amended as required – either because of changes in the Model Financial Regs and Standing Orders or because the Council agrees to change procedures.

The Parish Council approved the Financial Risk Assessment in March 2018

ACTION: To be reapproved annually and amended as required during the year.

CASH

No petty cash is held.

DIRECT DEBITS/STANDING ORDERS

These can only be set up after approval at a Council Meeting and approval shall be minuted.

AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

The Clerk prepares a list of payments to be authorised for each Parish Council Meeting. This includes payee, reason for payment, amount and the legal Power under which the payment can be made. This list is published as part of the Agenda and placed on the website and on the Council's noticeboards. Approved payments are also included in the Minutes.

CHEQUE SIGNING

The Council has four cheque signatories. This is considered to be a sufficient number.

Under no circumstances is the Clerk to be a cheque signatory.

Cheques are signed at a Council Meeting after the payment has been approved by the Council.

If it is necessary to sign cheques out of Meeting e.g. during August or December, the Clerk will report these to the next Meeting in the monthly Financial Report.

As part of the required audit trail for or each payment, the signatories check the invoice and initial/sign it, sign the cheque and initial/sign the stub in the cheque book.

USE OF BUSINESS DEBIT CARD

The card is in the name of the Clerk and is linked to the Council's Community Account.

The Clerk to retain the card securely and only use it when a payee does not accept cheque payment.

Any payments over £20.00 to be authorised in advance by the Chairman or Deputy Chairman.

The Debit Card is not to be used to take cash out. To prevent unauthorised withdrawals of cash. The Chairman will retain the PIN notification slip in a secure place. If it is necessary to use the PIN with the Debit Card to make a purchase, the Chairman and the Clerk make the purchase together and the Clerk will not have sight of the PIN.

As part of the Financial Report, all invoices where payment has been made by the Business Debit Card will be attached to the bank statement. Then Councillor checking the bank statements against the Financial Report will also verify that all Debit Card payments on the statement are supported by an invoice and that the payment is legal and appropriate. The Councillor may ask to see the authorisation email if necessary.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Clerk prepares a monthly Financial Report for the Council Meeting (January and September will cover two months).

This lists month end bank balances on both accounts held by the Council, expenditure and income in the last full month, plus any uncleared cheques. The bank balances in the Financial Report are checked by a Councillor against the paper statements from the bank. The Councillor signs a copy of the Financial Report and the bank balances to show that this has been done.

If the Council has five or more Members, the bank balance check to be carried out by non cheque signatories in rotation. Otherwise, all Councillors except the Chairman can check. The Financial Report also includes annual expenditure and income to date.

Bank statements and invoices for the current financial year are brought by the Clerk to each Meeting in case of queries.

SECURITY

Cheque books and debit card to be kept at the Clerk's house in a locked filing cabinet.

Payments to the Council are normally made by bank transfer or cheque, but if the Council does receive any cash, the Clerk is to bank it as soon as possible and take sensible precautions while carrying the cash.