

BRIDFORD PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

GENERAL

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.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) under the direction of the Parish Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

The RFO for Bridford Parish Council is the Clerk.

The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

THE ANNUAL BUDGET

Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payments on capital account when necessary, shall be prepared each year by the RFO

The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the budget not later than the December meeting.

The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

BUDGETARY CONTROL

The RFO shall at the end of each quarter provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each heading of the budget

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 £200. The Clerk shall report the action to the Chairman as soon as practicable thereafter.

The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council for office supplies or office equipment repair, subject to a limit of £200.

(FROM NALC MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024):

Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £200 excluding VAT.
- the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT.
- a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £1,000 excluding VAT
- in respect of any grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council
- the council for all items over £1,000;

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

ACCOUNTING

All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the current Account and Audit Regulations.

The records of Bridford Parish Council are:

- Receipts and payments spreadsheet
- Asset register

- Allotment register
- Minutes

The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts and shall submit them to the Council before the end of May.

The RFO shall be responsible for reclaiming VAT annually.

The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual return and shall submit it to the Council before the Audit date.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.

The relevant invoices should be presented at the Parish Council meeting. The expenditure should be approved by the Council and recorded in the Minutes.

Internet banking shall be accessed by way of a Username, Password and PIN number known only to the signatories.

- Payment cards
 - Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £200 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
 - Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and RFO and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
 - Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

All payments shall be made by the RFO by BACS, SO or CC (Lloyds) from Unity Trust Bank by online banking. The RFO should satisfy themselves that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received or carried out.

All payments shall be authorised by two of the designated signatories.

CLERK'S SALARY AND PAYE / NIC

With effect from 6th April 2011, all Parish Councils have had to be registered with HMRC as a PAYE employer and all salaries calculated monthly using the latest version of the Basic PAYE Tools programme supplied by HMRC which has been downloaded onto the Parish Council's computer system. This calculates the tax payable and NI contributions (if applicable).

Payments to HMRC will be sent by BACS. PAYE records must be submitted to HMRC on a monthly basis, on or before the date of payment of salary, in line with current rules and regulations. It is not permissible for Parish Clerks to receive gross payments or to be classed as self-employed. The only exceptions are where the Clerk's salary is their only income, and their total salary falls below the tax and NIC limits.

LOANS AND INVESTMENTS (if applicable)

Any loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council and agreed upon by a resolution of the Council and minuted. Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the Clerk at the earliest opportunity.

Any investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

All borrowings shall be made in the name of the Council.

All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

INCOME

The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of the RFO.

The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report from the Clerk.

Any bad debts shall be reported to the Council.

Receipts by cheque shall be sent to the Council's bankers within a week of the Clerk receiving them.

A reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on the paying in slip.

ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £200 excluding VAT, unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official letter would be inappropriate. Copies of letters issued shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

CONTRACTS

UPDATED 2025 IN LINE WITH PROCUREMENT ACT 2023

Procurement

- Councillors and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- Every contract shall comply with the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.
- Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed below) obtain prices as follows:
- For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.
- For contracts greater than £5000 excluding VAT the Clerk or RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;

- where the value is between £500 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk or RFO shall try to obtain 3 estimates where possible and practicable OR evidence of prices - which might include targeting known suppliers, evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- For smaller purchases, the Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- If less than three tenders, quotes or estimates are received or if all of the tenders, quotes or estimates are identical, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest tender, quote or estimate.

Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

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 the items below:

- For the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewage and telephone services
- For specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.
- 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.
- For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council
- For additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk / RFO shall at after consultation with the Chairman and vice Chairman of the Council)
- For goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at fixed price.

PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificate of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract. Where contracts provide for payments 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 Council.

Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Clerk in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure that a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and the purpose for which it is held. No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council.

INSURANCE

The RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Council. The insurance should be reviewed annually.

Adopted by Bridford Parish Council by way of a resolution at a meeting 11th March 2013 and reviewed annually.

Reviewed May 2024 and updated and reviewed April 2025

Reviewed April 2026

Original document signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO