

Hittisleigh Parish Council

Financial Regulations 2023/24

General

1. These Financial Regulations shall govern the financial transactions of Hittisleigh Parish Council (“the Council”).
2. These Financial Regulations shall not be amended other than by resolution of the Council.
3. The Clerk to the Council (“the Clerk”) is appointed as the Responsible Financial Officer, and shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council’s financial affairs.
4. These Financial Regulations shall be reviewed annually at a meeting of the Council and, where deemed necessary, amended and re-adopted.
5. The Council shall review annually the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement.

Annual Estimates, Budget and Precept

6. The Clerk shall present estimates of receipts and payments for the forthcoming financial year to an appropriate meeting of the Council. The Council shall then set the Budget and Precept for the forthcoming financial year. This is usually done in November in time for precept deadline (usually January)

Banking Arrangements

7. The Council’s banking arrangements are made by the Clerk and approved by the Council.
8. All cheques drawn on the account shall be signed by two Parish Councillors. The cheque stubs shall be initialled by the same Councillors.

Orders for work or goods

9. All work or purchase of goods must be authorised in advance of the work being carried out at a meeting of the Council and minuted. In the case of grants, such as may be received for Highways work, expenditure for individual items may be agreed outside of the Council meetings if required providing the amounts remain within the total expenditure agreed and subject to confirmation from all councillors (via email/phone). Details of any expenditure authorised this way will be minuted at the next Council meeting. More than one quote should be sought where appropriate, before placing an order for the provision of goods or services. Also see paragraph 13 below.
10. The Clerk, on behalf of the Council, shall be responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.

Payment of Invoices

11. Payments may be made by cheque as per regulation 8 and according to the approval process in regulation 9 and the clerk will follow up to ensure timely banking. The clerk will keep copies of invoices for the internal audit and for public inspection and archive for the requisite length of time.

There is currently no facility set up for payments by electronic bank transfer.

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12. The Clerk shall satisfy herself that the work or goods to which the invoices relate has been carried out satisfactorily or have been received in good condition, as applicable.

13. The Clerk is hereby authorised to make payment for work performed or goods received to a limited of combined payments of £100 between Council meetings – for payments greater than this, prior approval of the Council shall be obtained.

14. At meetings of the Council, the Clerk shall report all payments made since the previous meeting of the Council including payments of allowances, salaries, wages and expenses.

15. The Council is not registered for VAT.

Payment of allowances, salaries, wages and expenses

16. All Parish Councillors have agreed to forgo any allowances.

17. All Parish Councillors may seek a refund of out-of-pocket expenses.

18. The salary for the Clerk shall be determined at the meeting of the Council at which the Budget for the forthcoming financial year is approved.

Loans and Investments

20. The Council does not make any loans or investments but will review this policy from time to time.

Assets

21. The Clerk shall maintain, in an Asset Register, a record of all equipment, items and property owned by the Council and present this to the Council for an annual check at the November meeting.

Insurance

23. The Clerk shall present a Risk Assessment via the Risk Register to the first meeting of the new financial year (usually May), for consideration and adoption or when a material change may occur.

24. The Clerk shall review the Council's insurance cover annually, shall make recommendations to the Council, and given approval by the Council, shall affect adequate insurance for the Council.

25. The Clerk shall keep a record of the insurance affected by the Council and the property, equipment and risks covered thereby.

26. The Clerk shall negotiate all claims on behalf of the Council and shall seek the Council's approval before finalising such negotiations.

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Accounts and Audit

27. The Clerk shall comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Audit Commission Act 1998 (as amended) or any superceding legislation.

28. The Clerk shall keep a Receipts and Payments Record.

29. The Clerk shall report bi-annually to the Council (usually in November and in May), the current state of the Council's balances, the changes since the previous meeting and whether or not there is consistency with the approved budget.

30. The Clerk shall carry out a bi-annual Bank Reconciliation (in November and in May), and report this to the Council.

31. The Clerk shall complete the annual statement of accounts of the Council and any related documents as required by the Annual Return as soon as is practical after the end of the financial year and having certified them shall submit and report on them to the first meeting of the new financial year, for approval.

31. An Internal Auditor shall be appointed, or appointment confirmed, at the Annual Meeting (May) or the July meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall send the Internal Auditor a letter of appointment.

32. The Clerk shall submit the necessary governance documents and policies together with the accounts and the appropriate supporting documentation to the Internal Auditor in a timely way for the internal audit to be completed to fit with the dates specified for the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

32. The internal auditor, in person or via a report, shall present the annual internal audit report to the Council for consideration and review. The internal audit will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 or any superceding legislation and in advance of the Council's consideration and approval of the AGAR at the Annual Meeting.

36. Where there is an External Auditor report, the Clerk shall present this to the Council and publish as necessary.

37. The Clerk shall display the appropriate notices relating to the Audit process on the Council's noticeboard and website, as required by the Regulations.

38. The Clerk shall make the relevant documents available for inspection by the electors of the Parish, by appointment.

Reviewed: June 2023 (no changes)

Date of next review: March 2024