

Brixworth Parish Council

Banking Arrangements



Document Number	FP03
Adopted	May 2024
Reviewed	N/A
Next Review	May 2025
Folder Location: Operations/Policies/FINANCE	

1. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, are determined by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They will be reviewed annually for safety and efficiency.
- All invoices received for payment are checked for accuracy by the RFO and keyed to the Scribe system, which is used to control and reconcile all payment and receipt transactions against the Council's bank accounts.
- The Parish Admin prepares a schedule of payments requiring authorisation. This is presented to the Full Council meeting for approval under a standard agenda item.
- The council reviews the schedule for compliance and accuracy, having satisfied itself, authorises payment by a resolution of the council. The detailed list of all payments is included as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised.
- Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) are summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- All invoices for payment are examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that:
 - a. the work, goods or services has been received,
 - b. the work has been completed, and examined
 - c. the invoice represents expenditure previously approved by the council
 - d. the invoice is allocated to the correct budget line.
- All expenditure is included in the monthly payment list. The payments list is reviewed at the next available council meeting and approved. Any queries raised by the council are addressed.
- The RFO has delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - Expenditure for any items below £250 where there is an allocated budget available.
 - Expenditure on items between £250 and £1000 in liaison with the Chair of the Council.
 - The agreement to spend should be evidenced for audit purposes. Such spending should be reported to the next available Parish Council meeting.
- For each financial year the RFO draws up a list of payments made by direct debit or continuous payment as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year.
- A record of regular payments made under 9 above shall be included in the schedule of payments in 3, thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

- In respect of grants, formal requests are submitted to the Full Council meeting for consideration and approval. Council will approve expenditure in accordance with any policy statement approved by council.
- Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and will comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest.
- The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved by the RFO.

2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
2. Invoices received are input to the Scribe system, which generates a unique reference for each invoice.
3. The invoice is stamped with the control stamp and the RFO checks that the invoice is legitimate for payment and annotates the stamp.
4. Each Scribe entry is checked against the invoice, which is annotated by two Councillors for data accuracy.
5. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 3 above, a duly approved staff member (Verification Officer) initiates the payment by marking the items in Scribe and instructing Nat West to make the payment via internet banking.
6. Checks of randomly selected transactions/payments are completed each month by the Verification Officer of the Parish Council.
7. Transactions in Scribe are verified against Scribe entries for accuracy and control.
8. By preference, all payments are made by internet banking transfer where possible, or if not, by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers.
9. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee, shall be signed by two members of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
10. 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.
11. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.
12. The following regular payments are made by variable direct debit; all payments are reported to council as made.
 - Eon - Utilities for the Community Centre
 - Eon - Electricity for street lighting owned by the Council

- NPOWER – Street Lights
 - Wave/Anglian Water – for water use at Council owned sites
 - Insurance Premiums
 - DVLA - for road fund licence for Council vehicle
 - EE – for Mobile Telephones (x3)
 - Asda – for Staff Mobile Telephones
 - Lex – Van Lease
 - Peninsula – HR Management Services
 - Talk Talk – for Broadband & telephone landline services
 - Nat West Bank – for current account transaction fees
 - Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils
 - Society of Local Council Clerks
 - Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
 - Northants ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)
 - The Living Wage Foundation
 - ICO Data Protection
13. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at the annual Parish Council meeting in May.
 14. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at the annual Parish Council meeting in May.
 15. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question.
 16. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware, and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
 17. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
 18. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier.
 19. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact.

Policy Adopted: May 2024
Next Review Date: May 2025