

GREAT WYRLEY PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS



Version: 2026

Adopted:

Minute reference:

Effective from:

Review date: August, 2026

1. GENERAL

1.1 These Financial Regulations govern the financial administration and control of Great Wyrley Parish Council ("the Council").

1.2 These Financial Regulations shall be read alongside:

- the Council's Standing Orders;
- the Council's Scheme of Delegation;
- the Council's Risk Management Policy;
- the Council's Asset Register;
- the Council's reserves policy;
- the Council's procurement procedures;
- the Council's Code of Conduct;
- applicable legislation and regulations; and
- proper practices applicable to smaller authorities in England.

1.3 Where there is a conflict between these Financial Regulations and legislation, legislation shall prevail.

1.4 The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal financial control.

1.5 The Council shall maintain arrangements for:

- a) the proper administration of its financial affairs;
- b) the management of financial risk;
- c) the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption;
- d) the safeguarding of Council assets;
- e) the proper authorisation of expenditure;
- f) the maintenance of accurate accounting records;
- g) the preparation of statutory accounts and returns;
- h) value for money; and
- i) compliance with applicable procurement and financial legislation.

1.6 The Council shall comply with proper practices applicable to smaller authorities, including the current edition of the Practitioners' Guide issued by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel.

1.7 The Council's Responsible Financial Officer ("RFO") shall be the Parish Clerk unless the Council resolves otherwise.

1.8 The RFO shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with the policy direction of the Council.

1.9 The RFO shall maintain accounting records and accounting control systems in accordance with proper practices.

- 1.10** The RFO shall provide the Council with appropriate financial management information to enable it to monitor the Council's financial position and make informed decisions.
- 1.11** The RFO shall report any significant financial risk, irregularity or suspected fraud to the Chairman and the Council as appropriate.
- 1.12** The Council shall review the effectiveness of its system of internal control at least annually.
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2.0 ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL YEAR

- 2.1** The Council's accounting year shall run from 1 April to 31 March.
- 2.2** The RFO shall ensure that accounting records are maintained throughout the year and retained for the period required by law and the Council's retention policy.
- 2.3** The Council's accounts shall be prepared in accordance with applicable legislation and proper practices.
- 2.4** The RFO shall ensure that the Council's annual accounting and governance documents are prepared and submitted within the statutory deadlines.
- 2.5** The Council shall cooperate fully with its internal and external auditors.
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30. ANNUAL BUDGET

- 3.1** The RFO shall prepare detailed estimates of income and expenditure for the forthcoming financial year.
- 3.2** The budget shall take account of:
- existing commitments;
 - staff costs;
 - regular operating costs;
 - maintenance;
 - insurance;
 - planned projects;
 - capital expenditure;
 - reserves;
 - expected income;
 - inflation;
 - known contractual commitments;
 - risks and contingencies; and
 - other relevant financial information.

- 3.3** The Council shall consider and approve the annual budget before determining the precept.
- 3.4** The Council shall determine the precept in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 3.5** The RFO shall submit the precept to the billing authority within the required timescale.
- 3.6** The Council shall not incur expenditure that would result in an unlawful overspend.
- 3.7** The Council may amend the approved budget by resolution.
- 3.8** Significant amendments to the budget shall be clearly recorded in the minutes.

4.0 BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 4.1** The RFO shall provide regular financial reports to the Council.
- 4.2** The Council shall monitor actual income and expenditure against the approved budget.
- 4.3** Financial reports shall normally include:
 - a) budgeted expenditure;
 - b) actual expenditure;
 - c) budget remaining;
 - d) income received;
 - e) bank balances;
 - f) reserves;
 - g) significant variances; and
 - h) any other information considered necessary.
- 4.4** Material variances from budget shall be investigated and reported to the Council.
- 4.5** No expenditure shall be incurred unless:
 - a) it is for a lawful Council purpose;
 - b) appropriate budget provision exists; or
 - c) it is authorised under a lawful delegated or emergency arrangement.
- 4.6** The RFO shall maintain an appropriate record of commitments where necessary.
- 4.7** Unspent budget provisions shall not automatically be carried forward to the following financial year.

4.8 Where the Council wishes to retain unspent funds for a specific future purpose, it shall consider whether an earmarked reserve should be established.

5.0 RESERVES

5.1 The Council shall maintain appropriate reserves.

5.2 Reserves shall be classified as:

- a) general reserves; and
- b) earmarked reserves.

5.3 General reserves shall provide an appropriate level of financial resilience against unforeseen expenditure, budgetary pressures and emergencies.

5.4 Earmarked reserves shall be established by Council resolution for specific purposes.

5.5 The Council shall review reserves as part of its annual budget-setting process.

5.6 The RFO shall advise the Council where reserves are considered excessive, inadequate or no longer required for their original purpose.

5.7 Where an earmarked reserve is no longer required, the Council shall determine whether it should be transferred back to general reserves or allocated to another lawful purpose.

6.0 AUTHORITY TO SPEND

6.1 The Council shall authorise expenditure through its approved budget, resolutions or lawful delegated powers.

6.2 The RFO may incur routine expenditure within an approved budget where the expenditure is necessary for the ordinary administration and operation of the Council.

6.3 The RFO shall not commit the Council to expenditure outside approved delegated authority.

6.4 Individual councillors shall not commit the Council to expenditure unless expressly authorised.

6.5 No councillor or officer shall enter into a contract on behalf of the Council without appropriate authority.

6.6 Expenditure shall comply with the Council's procurement procedures.

6.7 The RFO shall ensure that expenditure is recorded against the appropriate budget heading.

7.0 EMERGENCY EXPENDITURE

7.1 The RFO may incur expenditure of up to **£1,000** without prior Council approval where immediate action is reasonably necessary to:

- protect Council property;
- protect the health or safety of employees or members of the public;
- prevent significant damage;
- restore an essential Council service; or
- address another genuine financial or operational emergency.

7.2 The RFO shall use reasonable judgement and shall obtain quotations where practicable.

7.3 Emergency expenditure shall be limited to what is reasonably necessary to address the emergency.

7.4 The Chairman or Vice-Chairman should be consulted before emergency expenditure is incurred wherever reasonably practicable.

7.5 If the RFO considers that expenditure exceeding £1,000 is necessary in an emergency, the RFO shall, wherever practicable, obtain approval from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman before committing the expenditure.

7.6 Where the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and RFO are unavailable, urgent action may be authorised by three councillors where lawful and necessary.

7.7 The reason for the emergency expenditure, amount spent and supplier shall be recorded.

7.8 All emergency expenditure shall be reported to the next appropriate Council meeting.

7.9 Emergency expenditure shall be separately identifiable in the schedule of payments.

8.0 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 The Council's bank accounts shall be held in the name of Great Wyrley Parish Council.

8.2 Banking arrangements shall be approved by the Council.

8.3 The Council shall review its banking arrangements periodically.

8.4 The Council shall use appropriate banking controls to protect public funds.

- 8.5** Bank mandates shall be approved by the Council.
- 8.6** At least two authorised persons shall be required to approve payments from the Council's bank accounts, subject to the banking arrangements and Financial Regulations.
- 8.7** No person shall approve a payment to themselves.
- 8.8** The RFO shall ensure that bank reconciliations are prepared regularly.
- 8.9** Bank reconciliations shall be independently reviewed at least quarterly by a councillor who is not involved in preparing the reconciliation.
- 8.10** The reviewer shall sign and date the reconciliation or otherwise record the review.
- 8.11** Online banking access shall be restricted to authorised persons.
- 8.12** User access shall be reviewed periodically and immediately following changes in staffing or responsibilities.
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9. PAYMENTS

9.1 Payments may be made by:

- BACS;
- bank transfer;
- cheque;
- direct debit;
- standing order; or
- another lawful payment method approved by the Council.

9.2 The Council shall maintain appropriate controls over electronic payments.

9.3 All invoices shall be checked before payment.

9.4 The RFO shall verify, where appropriate:

- a) the supplier;
- b) the amount;
- c) VAT;
- d) the goods or services received;
- e) the budget heading;
- f) the authorisation;
- g) the contractual terms; and
- h) any applicable procurement requirements.

9.5 A schedule of payments shall normally be presented to each ordinary Council meeting.

9.6 The schedule shall contain sufficient information for councillors to understand the nature and amount of each payment.

9.7 Where appropriate, original invoices or electronic copies shall be made available for inspection by councillors.

9.8 Payments shall be recorded in the accounting system.

9.9 Retrospective approval shall not be used as a substitute for obtaining proper authority in advance, except where these Financial Regulations expressly permit emergency or delegated action.

10.0 AUGUST RECESS AND URGENT PAYMENTS

10.1 The Council normally has a recess during August.

10.2 During the recess, the RFO may process routine contractual or statutory payments which cannot reasonably be delayed until the next Council meeting.

10.3 Payments shall remain within approved budget and delegated authority.

10.4 Urgent payments during the recess shall be authorised in accordance with the Council's banking mandate.

10.5 At least two authorised signatories shall approve cheque or electronic payments where required by the Council's banking arrangements.

10.6 A schedule of payments made during the recess shall be presented to the next appropriate Council meeting.

10.7 The Council shall review the payments and record them in the minutes.

10.8 The August procedure shall not be used to bypass the Council's procurement requirements or other financial controls.

11. SALARIES AND EMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS

11.1 The Council shall comply with applicable employment, PAYE and National Insurance requirements.

11.2 Salaries shall be paid monthly in accordance with approved employment terms and payroll records.

11.3 The Council shall maintain appropriate payroll records.

11.4 Payroll shall be reviewed before payment.

11.5 Changes to salary, hours, allowances or other employment terms shall only be made by the Council or an authorised body/person acting under delegated authority.

11.6 Statutory deductions shall be made as required.

11.7 The Council shall make pension contributions and other statutory payments where required.

11.8 Payroll information shall be treated as confidential personal information.

12. STAFF EXPENSES

12.1 Employees may claim reasonable expenses properly incurred in carrying out authorised Council duties.

12.2 Claims shall normally be submitted within a reasonable period and supported by receipts.

12.3 Expenses shall comply with any staff expenses policy adopted by the Council.

12.4 Councillors may only claim expenses where:

- a) the expenditure is incurred for an authorised Council purpose;
- b) the claim is permitted by law and Council policy; and
- c) appropriate receipts or other evidence are provided.

12.5 No reimbursement shall be made where the expenditure was not authorised or cannot properly be shown to be a Council expense.

12.6 VAT shall be dealt with in accordance with applicable VAT rules.

13.0 VAT

13.1 The Council shall account for VAT in accordance with HMRC requirements.

13.2 The RFO shall maintain appropriate VAT records.

13.3 VAT shall be correctly identified on invoices and accounting records.

13.4 Where the Council is entitled to recover VAT, the RFO shall submit appropriate claims to HMRC.

13.5 VAT recovery shall be determined according to the nature of the expenditure and applicable HMRC rules.

13.6 The Council shall not automatically treat VAT on all expenditure as recoverable.

13.7 VAT126 claims shall be submitted where appropriate and within the applicable statutory period.

14.0 INCOME

- 14.1** The RFO shall be responsible for the proper collection, recording and banking of sums due to the Council.
 - 14.2** All income shall be recorded promptly.
 - 14.3** Cash received shall be safeguarded and banked as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - 14.4** The Council shall not use money received for one purpose to meet expenditure for another purpose unless lawfully permitted.
 - 14.5** Personal cheques shall not be cashed using Council funds.
 - 14.6** The RFO shall maintain appropriate records of invoices and amounts due.
 - 14.7** Outstanding debts shall be monitored.
 - 14.8** Where necessary, the Council shall determine whether formal debt recovery action is appropriate.
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15.0 ORDERS FOR GOODS, SERVICES AND WORKS

- 15.1** Official orders or written instructions shall be used where appropriate.
 - 15.2** Orders shall identify the Council, supplier, goods/services required and agreed price where known.
 - 15.3** Orders shall only be issued by persons authorised by the Council.
 - 15.4** Officers shall seek value for money.
 - 15.5** The Council shall not place an order merely to avoid a procurement threshold or financial control.
 - 15.6** Orders shall comply with the procurement provisions in these Financial Regulations.
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16.0 PROCUREMENT

- 16.1** The Council shall comply with all procurement legislation applicable to it, including the Procurement Act 2023 and regulations made under it where applicable.
- 16.2** The Council shall also comply with applicable procurement guidance, the Council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations.
- 16.3** Procurement shall be conducted in a manner that is transparent, proportionate, fair and designed to achieve value for money.

- 16.4** The Council shall not artificially divide a requirement into smaller contracts or procurements in order to avoid statutory procurement requirements.
- 16.5** The estimated value of a contract shall be calculated in accordance with applicable procurement legislation and shall include relevant options, extensions and other amounts required by law.
- 16.6** Procurement procedures shall be determined according to the estimated total contract value and the legal framework applicable to the procurement.
- 16.7** Where the Procurement Act 2023 applies, the Council shall comply with the Act and associated regulations.
- 16.8** Where a procurement is below the applicable Procurement Act threshold, the Council shall comply with the statutory requirements applying to below-threshold contracts.
- 16.9** Where a below-threshold contract is a notifiable below-threshold contract, the Council shall comply with the statutory requirements concerning publication of a below-threshold tender notice and contract details notice.
- 16.10** For procurements commencing on or after 1 April 2026, the Council shall comply with applicable requirements concerning supplier identifiers and the Central Digital Platform.
- 16.11** The Council shall consider barriers that SMEs may face when competing for applicable below-threshold contracts and whether those barriers can reasonably be reduced.
- 16.12** The Council shall comply with applicable requirements concerning payment terms, contract performance and publication of payment information.
- 16.13** Where a procurement is not subject to the Procurement Act 2023, the Council shall nevertheless apply appropriate competitive and value-for-money procedures.
- 16.14** The Council shall maintain appropriate procurement records.
- 16.15** The Council shall publish procurement information where required by law or the Transparency Code.
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17.0 QUOTATIONS

- 17.1** For contracts below the statutory Procurement Act threshold, the Council shall normally seek competitive quotations where appropriate and proportionate.
- 17.2** For expenditure between **£3,000 and £30,000 including VAT**, the RFO should normally seek at least three written quotations or comparable written prices where the market permits.
- 17.3** For expenditure below £3,000, the RFO shall obtain evidence of value for money appropriate to the circumstances.
- 17.4** The Council may depart from the normal quotation procedure where:
- a) there is only one suitable supplier;
 - b) the goods or services are proprietary;
 - c) compatibility with existing equipment or services makes competition impracticable;
 - d) there is genuine urgency;
 - e) the procurement is through an existing lawful framework;
 - f) the Council has received insufficient suitable quotations after reasonable attempts;
 - g) the value or nature of the requirement makes a full quotation exercise disproportionate; or
 - h) another lawful exception applies.
- 17.5** Where the normal quotation procedure is not followed for a significant procurement, the reason shall be recorded.
- 17.6** The use of the Council's quotation requirements shall not remove or reduce any statutory procurement obligation.
- 17.7** The Council is not obliged to accept the lowest quotation where another quotation represents better overall value or is otherwise more advantageous, provided the decision is lawful, transparent and properly justified.
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18.0 TENDERS

- 18.1** Where a formal tender procedure is required, the Council shall approve the procurement arrangements before invitations are issued unless delegated authority has been properly granted.
- 18.2** Tender documentation shall include:
- a clear specification;
 - contract requirements;
 - evaluation criteria;
 - submission requirements;
 - deadline;

- conditions of tender;
- relevant contractual terms; and
- any statutory information required.

18.3 Tenderers shall be given the same information and reasonable opportunity to submit tenders.

18.4 Tenders shall be securely submitted and retained.

18.5 Tender submissions shall not be opened before the stated deadline.

18.6 Tenders shall be opened in accordance with the approved procurement procedure.

18.7 The Council shall maintain an appropriate audit trail.

18.8 Tender evaluation shall be undertaken against the published criteria.

18.9 Councillors and officers involved in tender evaluation shall declare relevant interests.

18.10 The Council shall not accept a late tender unless permitted by the applicable procurement procedure and legislation.

18.11 The award of a contract shall be formally recorded.

19.0 CONTRACTS

19.1 Contracts shall be in writing where appropriate and shall clearly identify:

- the parties;
- the scope of work;
- price;
- duration;
- payment terms;
- termination arrangements;
- performance requirements; and
- other material terms.

19.2 The Council shall ensure that contracts are signed by authorised persons.

19.3 Contracts shall be managed by the officer or person designated by the Council.

19.4 Material variations to contracts shall be approved by an authorised person and shall comply with applicable procurement law.

19.5 The Council shall not make a contract variation that would unlawfully circumvent procurement requirements.

19.6 Contract performance shall be monitored.

19.7 Significant contract failures shall be reported to the Council.

19.8 Where appropriate, contracts shall contain provisions dealing with:

- insurance;
 - safeguarding;
 - data protection;
 - health and safety;
 - confidentiality;
 - intellectual property;
 - termination;
 - dispute resolution; and
 - compliance with law.
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20.0 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS

20.1 Building and construction contracts shall be subject to appropriate written specifications and contractual terms.

20.2 Where professional supervision is required, payments may be made against appropriate certificates or evidence of work completed.

20.3 The RFO shall maintain a record of payments made under construction contracts.

20.4 Significant variations shall be reported to the Council.

20.5 Where the projected final cost is materially above the approved contract value or budget, the matter shall be referred to the Council for consideration.

20.6 No variation shall be authorised where it would unlawfully alter the procurement or circumvent applicable procurement requirements.

21.0 DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS

21.1 Direct debits and standing orders may be used for regular expenditure where authorised by the Council.

21.2 The RFO shall maintain a register of direct debits and standing orders.

21.3 The register shall be reviewed periodically.

21.4 Direct debits shall only be established for legitimate Council expenditure.

21.5 The Council shall periodically review whether direct debits remain necessary and appropriate.

22.0 PURCHASE CARDS AND PAYMENT CARDS

- 22.1** The Council may use a debit card or purchasing card only where authorised by Council resolution.
 - 22.2** The card shall be held by an authorised officer.
 - 22.3** The card shall only be used for Council expenditure.
 - 22.4** Personal expenditure shall not be charged to a Council card.
 - 22.5** Receipts shall be retained for all card transactions.
 - 22.6** Card statements shall be reconciled to receipts and accounting records.
 - 22.7** The cardholder shall not approve their own expenditure.
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23.0 ASSETS

- 23.1** The Council shall maintain an asset register.
 - 23.2** The asset register shall contain sufficient information to identify and control significant Council assets.
 - 23.3** The register shall be reviewed at least annually.
 - 23.4** Assets shall be appropriately insured where necessary.
 - 23.5** Disposal of Council assets shall be authorised by the Council or under properly delegated authority.
 - 23.6** Assets shall not be disposed of for personal benefit or below reasonable value without lawful justification.
 - 23.7** The Council shall maintain appropriate records of asset disposals.
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24.0 INSURANCE

- 24.1** The Council shall maintain appropriate insurance cover.
- 24.2** Insurance requirements shall be reviewed as part of the annual risk assessment.
- 24.3** The RFO shall arrange insurance renewals in accordance with Council policy and approved authority.

- 24.4** Significant changes in Council activities, assets, staffing or liabilities shall be considered when reviewing insurance.
- 24.5** Fidelity guarantee insurance shall be maintained at a level appropriate to the Council's maximum risk exposure.
- 24.6** Claims shall be notified promptly.
- 24.7** The Council shall review its insurance arrangements annually.
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25.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 25.1** The Council shall maintain a financial risk assessment.
- 25.2** The financial risk assessment shall be reviewed **at least annually**.
- 25.3** Significant risks shall be identified, assessed and assigned appropriate controls.
- 25.4** The risk assessment shall consider:
- fraud;
 - banking;
 - electronic payments;
 - cash;
 - procurement;
 - contracts;
 - staffing;
 - assets;
 - insurance;
 - data;
 - cyber security;
 - business interruption;
 - reserves;
 - income;
 - expenditure; and
 - other significant financial risks.
- 25.5** The RFO shall report significant changes in financial risk to the Council.
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26.0 FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

- 26.1** The Council has zero tolerance for fraud and corruption.
- 26.2** Councillors and officers shall report suspected fraud, theft, corruption or financial irregularity to the Clerk/RFO and Chairman.
- 26.3** Where appropriate, suspected fraud shall be reported to the police, auditor or other relevant authority.

26.4 The Council shall investigate financial irregularities appropriately.

26.5 The Council shall maintain appropriate controls to reduce the risk of fraud.

26.6 No person shall approve a transaction in which they have an undisclosed personal or financial interest.

27.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

27.1 Councillors and officers shall comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and relevant legislation.

27.2 A councillor or officer shall declare a relevant interest before participating in a financial decision.

27.3 A person with a conflict of interest shall not participate in the procurement, approval or payment of a transaction where their participation would be inappropriate or unlawful.

27.4 The RFO shall maintain appropriate records of declarations where required.

28.0 LOANS AND BORROWING

28.1 The Council shall not borrow money without complying with all applicable statutory requirements.

28.2 Any proposed borrowing shall be considered and approved by the Council.

28.3 Where borrowing approval is required from the appropriate authority, it shall be obtained before the borrowing is undertaken.

28.4 Borrowing shall be in the name of Great Wyrley Parish Council.

28.5 Loan terms shall be recorded.

28.6 Borrowings shall be reviewed at least annually.

29.0 INVESTMENTS

29.1 Investments shall only be made in accordance with an investment strategy approved by the Council.

29.2 The Council shall prioritise security and liquidity over speculative returns.

29.3 Investments shall be made in the name of Great Wyrley Parish Council.

29.4 Investment decisions shall comply with applicable legislation and proper practices.

29.5 Investment records and certificates shall be retained securely.

29.6 The Council shall review investments periodically.

30.0 INTERNAL AUDIT

30.1 The Council shall appoint an independent and competent internal auditor.

30.2 The internal auditor shall operate independently of the Council's day-to-day financial administration.

30.3 The internal auditor shall undertake work in accordance with proper practices and the Council's agreed internal audit arrangements.

30.4 The Council shall consider the internal auditor's report.

30.5 Recommendations shall be acted upon or formally considered by the Council.

30.6 The Council shall maintain an audit trail showing how significant internal audit findings have been addressed.

31.0 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTING RETURN

31.1 The Council shall prepare and approve its Annual Governance and Accountability Return ("AGAR") in accordance with statutory deadlines.

31.2 The RFO shall prepare the financial information required for the AGAR.

31.3 The Council shall consider the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements.

31.4 The Council shall comply with the public rights period.

31.5 The Council shall publish the documents required by law.

31.6 The Council shall cooperate with its appointed external auditor.

32.0 FINANCIAL REPORTING

32.1 The RFO shall provide financial reports to the Council at regular intervals.

32.2 Financial reports shall be sufficiently detailed to enable councillors to monitor the Council's financial position.

32.3 The Council shall consider significant variances.

32.4 The RFO shall notify the Council of any material financial concern.

32.5 The Council may request additional financial information where reasonably necessary.

33.0 DOCUMENT RETENTION

33.1 Financial records shall be retained for the period required by law, proper practices and the Council's document retention policy.

33.2 Financial records shall include, where applicable:

- invoices;
- receipts;
- bank statements;
- payment schedules;
- payroll records;
- VAT records;
- contracts;
- tenders;
- quotations;
- purchase orders;
- accounting records;
- audit records;
- asset records; and
- records supporting Council decisions.

33.3 Documents containing personal or confidential information shall be securely stored.

33.4 Documents shall be disposed of securely when the applicable retention period has expired.

34.0 ELECTRONIC RECORDS AND CYBER SECURITY

34.1 Electronic financial records shall be backed up appropriately.

34.2 Access to financial systems shall be restricted to authorised persons.

34.3 Passwords and authentication credentials shall be kept confidential.

34.4 Where available, multi-factor authentication should be used for financial systems and online banking.

34.5 Changes to bank details supplied by a contractor or supplier shall be independently verified before payment where reasonably practicable.

34.6 The Council shall maintain appropriate procedures for responding to suspected cyber fraud or financial cyber incidents.

34.7 Financial information shall be handled in accordance with data protection requirements.

35.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION

35.1 Financial information shall be managed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and other applicable information legislation.

35.2 Personal data shall only be processed where there is a lawful basis.

35.3 Financial records shall not be disclosed where disclosure would be unlawful.

35.4 The Council shall comply with applicable transparency obligations.

36.0 MEMBERS' INSPECTION OF FINANCIAL RECORDS

36.1 Councillors may inspect Council financial records where they are entitled to do so for the proper discharge of their duties.

36.2 Access to information shall be subject to legal restrictions.

36.3 Councillors shall not use confidential financial information for an improper purpose.

36.4 The Clerk/RFO shall provide reasonable access to records where appropriate.

37.0 PAYMENTS TO COUNCILLORS

37.1 Councillors shall only be reimbursed for expenditure properly incurred on behalf of the Council.

37.2 Claims shall be supported by receipts or other appropriate evidence.

37.3 Councillors shall not approve their own claims.

37.4 Where a councillor has a relevant interest in a payment, the councillor shall comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and these Financial Regulations.

38.0 GRANTS AND DONATIONS

- 38.1** The Council may award grants or financial assistance only where it has lawful power to do so.
- 38.2** Grant applications shall be considered in accordance with a Council-approved grants policy.
- 38.3** The Council shall record grant decisions.
- 38.4** The Council may impose conditions on grant recipients.
- 38.5** Where appropriate, grant recipients shall provide evidence that funds have been used for the approved purpose.
- 38.6** Grants shall not be used to circumvent procurement requirements.
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39.0 VAT AND CONTRACT VALUES

- 39.1** Unless legislation specifically provides otherwise, procurement thresholds shall be calculated using the basis required by the applicable procurement legislation.
- 39.2** Where a statutory procurement threshold is expressed as including VAT, the Council shall use the VAT-inclusive value.
- 39.3** The RFO shall ensure that the Council does not deliberately structure expenditure to avoid a statutory threshold.
- 39.4** VAT shall be accounted for separately within the Council's accounting records where appropriate.
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40. PROCUREMENT RECORDS

- 40.1** The Council shall retain appropriate procurement records, including where relevant:
- specification;
 - estimated contract value;
 - quotations;
 - tenders;
 - evaluation criteria;
 - evaluation records;
 - conflicts of interest declarations;
 - award decision;
 - contract;
 - variations;
 - performance information; and
 - payment information.

40.2 Procurement records shall be retained for the period required by law and the Council's retention policy.

41.0 PAYMENT TERMS

41.1 The Council shall pay valid and undisputed invoices within the contractual payment period.

41.2 Where the Procurement Act 2023 applies, the Council shall comply with its statutory payment requirements.

41.3 Where an invoice is disputed or considered invalid, the supplier shall be informed without undue delay.

41.4 The RFO may take reasonable steps to avoid statutory interest or other charges where a payment is valid, due and properly authorised.

41.5 Such action shall be reported to the next appropriate Council meeting where it was taken outside the normal payment cycle.

42.0 PETTY CASH

42.1 The Council should avoid the use of petty cash where practical.

42.2 If a petty cash system is established, the Council shall set a maximum float and appropriate controls.

42.3 Petty cash shall only be used for legitimate Council expenditure.

42.4 Receipts shall be retained.

42.5 Petty cash shall be reconciled regularly.

43.0 FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

43.1 Any suspected financial irregularity shall be reported immediately to the Chairman and RFO.

43.2 The RFO shall take reasonable steps to secure records and prevent further loss.

43.3 The Council shall determine appropriate action.

43.4 Where required, the Council shall notify the police, insurer, external auditor, internal auditor or other relevant authority.

43.5 Any material irregularity shall be recorded and reported appropriately.

44.0 COUNCIL ASSETS AND PROPERTY

- 44.1** Council property shall only be used for lawful Council purposes unless the Council has authorised otherwise.
- 44.2** Council assets shall not be removed, disposed of, loaned or transferred without appropriate authority.
- 44.3** The Council shall maintain appropriate records of property held.
- 44.4** Where assets are rented, leased or hired, the Council shall maintain appropriate records of contractual obligations.

45.0 FINANCIAL DELEGATION

- 45.1** The Council shall maintain a Scheme of Delegation identifying the financial powers delegated to officers, committees and councillors.
- 45.2** Delegated financial authority shall be subject to:
- the approved budget;
 - these Financial Regulations;
 - Standing Orders;
 - procurement legislation;
 - the Scheme of Delegation; and
 - any specific resolution of the Council.
- 45.3** A delegated authority shall not be used to circumvent a Council decision.
- 45.4** Delegated decisions shall be recorded where required.
- 45.5** Significant delegated decisions shall be reported to the next appropriate Council meeting.

46.0 SEPARATION OF DUTIES

- 46.1** The Council shall, so far as reasonably practicable, separate the duties of:
- ordering goods or services;
 - receiving goods or services;
 - checking invoices;
 - approving payments;
 - making payments; and
 - reconciling bank accounts.
- 46.2** Where staffing levels make complete separation impracticable, additional independent checks shall be introduced.

46.3 The Council shall periodically review the effectiveness of its financial controls.

47.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

47.1 These Financial Regulations shall be reviewed at least annually.

47.2 The review shall take account of:

- legislative changes;
- the current Practitioners' Guide;
- changes to procurement legislation;
- audit findings;
- internal control findings;
- changes in Council activities;
- identified financial risks; and
- changes to national guidance.

47.3 Amendments shall be approved by Council resolution.

48.0 INTERPRETATION

48.1 In these Financial Regulations:

"Council" means Great Wyrley Parish Council.

"Chairman" means the Chairman of the Council or the person lawfully presiding at a meeting.

"Clerk" means the Parish Clerk.

"RFO" means the Responsible Financial Officer.

"proper practices" means the accounting and governance practices applicable to smaller authorities in England.

"procurement legislation" includes the Procurement Act 2023, regulations made under it and other legislation applicable to the Council.

48.2 References to legislation include amendments, replacements and subordinate legislation.

49.0 ADOPTION

These Financial Regulations were adopted by resolution of Great Wyrley Parish Council at a meeting held on:

Date: _____

Minute reference: _____

Chairman: _____

Clerk/RFO: _____

Review date: _____

SCHEDULE 1 – FINANCIAL AUTHORITIES

The following limits shall apply unless otherwise resolved by the Council:

Matter	Authority
Routine expenditure within approved budget	RFO, subject to these Regulations
Emergency expenditure	RFO up to £1,000
Emergency expenditure above £1,000	Council, or authorised emergency procedure
Bank payments	Two authorised signatories/authorisers
Budget amendments	Council resolution
Precept	Council resolution
Borrowing	Council resolution and statutory approval where required
Investments	Council resolution under approved investment strategy
Disposal of significant assets	Council resolution
Procurement	In accordance with these Regulations and applicable law
Contract award	Council or properly delegated authority
Grants	Council resolution unless properly delegated
Write-off of debts	Council resolution
Changes to Financial Regulations	Council resolution

SCHEDULE 2 – PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES

For every significant procurement, the Council shall consider:

1. What is being purchased?
2. What is the estimated total contract value?
3. Is VAT included in the relevant threshold?
4. Is the Procurement Act 2023 applicable?
5. Is the contract exempt?
6. Is it a below-threshold contract?
7. Does a tender notice need to be published?
8. Does a contract details notice need to be published?
9. Does the Central Digital Platform need to be used?

Are supplier identifiers required?

10. What quotation/tender process is proportionate?
11. Are there conflicts of interest?
12. Are there barriers to SMEs?
13. Does the Council have adequate budget?
14. Is the contract properly documented?
15. How will performance be monitored?
16. What information must be published?

SCHEDULE 3 – DOCUMENTS TO BE READ WITH THESE REGULATIONS

These Financial Regulations shall be read alongside:

1. Great Wyrley Parish Council Standing Orders;
2. Council Scheme of Delegation;
3. Code of Conduct;
4. Risk Management Policy;
5. Reserves Policy;
6. Asset Register;
7. Procurement Procedures;
8. Complaints Procedure;
9. Data Protection/Privacy Policy;
10. Freedom of Information Policy;
11. Document Retention Policy;
12. Internal Audit arrangements;
13. Employment and HR policies;
14. Business Continuity arrangements; and
15. any other financial policy adopted by the Council.

NOTE ON LEGISLATION

These Financial Regulations are intended to operate alongside the legislation and proper practices applicable to Great Wyrley Parish Council.

Where legislation, statutory guidance or proper practices change, the Council shall review these Financial Regulations and make any necessary amendments.

In particular, procurement thresholds and procurement procedures may change. The Council shall apply the statutory threshold and requirements in force when a procurement is commenced rather than relying on an obsolete figure contained in these Regulations.