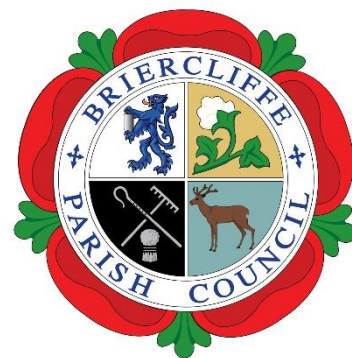


Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS



Adopted by: Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council – January 2026

Minute Number – 25/26/0508

Next Review: January 2029

1. Introduction

These Financial Regulations (hereinafter “the Regulations” govern the conduct of financial management by Briercliffe Parish Council (hereinafter “the Council”. They may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council’s functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These Regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors
- Employees (including the Clerk)
- Volunteers
- Members of the public (where relevant)

3. Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Data Protection Act 2018 (if applicable)
- Equality Act 2010 (if applicable)
- Guidance from National Association of Local Councils

5. Governance and Management (Roles and Responsibilities)

Council

- Overall responsibility for adoption and review of the policy

Clerk

- Day-to-day implementation
- Monitoring compliance

Councillors

- Adherence to the policy
- Reporting any concerns

6 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

- 6.1 The RFO is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the Council. The Clerk may be appointed as RFO and these Regulations will apply accordingly. The RFO acting under the policy direction of the Council shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices.
- 6.2 The RFO shall manage accounting records and control systems on behalf of the Council. The RFO shall ensure that accounting control systems are observed and that the Council's accounting records are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices.
- 6.3 The RFO shall produce financial management information as required by the Council.
- 6.4 At least once a year and prior to approving the annual return, the Council shall review the effectiveness of its internal control systems, which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 6.5 In these Regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations shall mean the Regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force and the Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/54). In these Regulations, the term "proper practice" or "proper practices" shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales – a Practitioners' Guide* which is published jointly by NALC and SLCC and updated from time to time.
- 6.6 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994, section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the end of the financial year.

7 Financial Administration

- 7.1 Day to day financial administration is the responsibility of the RFO.
- 7.2 The management of the RFO function is the responsibility of the Council's Finance Lead Councillor, supported by the Finance Working Group.
- 7.3 The financial position of the parish Council will be reported at each meeting.
- 7.4 All paperwork pertaining to financial administration will be kept by the RFO. Paperwork and relevant information stored in digital form will be kept for 7 years or in the case of Deeds, title documents, ownership documents, etc for the life of the item. The Deeds, title documents, ownership documents will be kept by the RFO and may be stored online or in paper form.
- 7.5 Management of online accounts and access to financial administration will normally be done by the RFO. An up-to-date list of all usernames, passwords, bank account details and signatories will be maintained by the RFO and shared with the Council's Finance Working Group.
- 7.6 The Council's banking arrangements, including Bank Mandates, shall be managed by the Clerk and approved by the Council. They shall be reviewed at least annually for efficiency.

- 7.7 A schedule of payments required, forming part of the meeting Agenda, shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with relevant invoices, be presented to each Council meeting. If the schedule is in order, it shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and shall be initialled by the Chair of the meeting. If more appropriate the detail may be shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- 7.8 Cheques drawn on the Council's bank accounts in accordance with the schedule shall be signed by three members of Council.
- 7.9 Signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil to indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the invoice or similar documentation and will sign the supporting invoice and/or supporting paperwork.

8 Audit and Irregularities

- 8.1 Any member of the Council has the right and authority to:
- Have access to any of the Council's records and correspondence, which they consider relevant to the financial activities of the Council
 - Require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination
 - Require any member or employee of the Council to produce cash, stores or any other Council property under their control within two weeks.
- 8.2 The members of the Finance Working Group/RFO shall ensure the provision of an internal audit service to appraise the systems of internal audit control which they consider necessary in meeting the Council's account and audit responsibilities. and to comment on the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the Council's activities.
- 8.3 Where any member or officer has cause to suspect irregularity, they shall immediately inform the Council's Finance Lead Councillor or another member of the Finance Working Group. If it is established that irregularity has occurred, or is occurring, the Finance Lead Councillor shall immediately inform the Council.
- 8.4 All members and officers shall supply the members of the Finance Working Group with all necessary information and access to records to enable them to discharge this responsibility.
- 8.5 The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the Council in accordance with proper practices. The Internal or other Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one report in respect of each financial year. To demonstrate objectivity and independence, the internal auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 8.6 The Clerk shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any Notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 8.7 The Clerk shall bring to the attention of all councillors as soon as practicable, any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor.

9 Contracts

- 9.1 The regulations for the conduct of contracts shall be as follows:
- 9.1.1 Contracts between £1 and £15,000 to be authorised by the full Council.
 - 9.1.2 Contracts over £15,000 to be authorised by the full Parish Council and consultation with the public.
 - 9.1.3 The contract is within budget or will be referred to the Finance Working Group to consider any significant budget variance.
 - 9.1.4 A larger contract is not sub-divided.
 - 9.1.5 Contract checklists relevant to the nature of the contract are followed.
 - 9.1.6 The authorising officer signs the retained purchase order document, which will then form the register of contracts.
- 9.2 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 9.3 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 9.4 All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. Anyone issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions.
- 9.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the Clerk shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.
- 9.6 Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £5,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 27.
- 9.6.1 The RFO shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list;
 - 9.6.2 If applications are made to waive Regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council which shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting; and
 - 9.6.3 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk.

10 Accounts

- 10.1 The Council and Finance Working Group will agree all accounting procedures and financial records of the Council and its officers.

- 10.2 The RFO will compile all accounts and accounting records, under the direction of the Finance Working Group.
- 10.3 The RFO in liaison with the Finance Working Group shall be responsible for preparing for approval by the full Council. There will be a stipulated timetable for all accounts, audits and budgets. All staff shall comply with such timetables and requirement.

11 ANNUAL BUDGET - Revenue Estimates

- 11.1 The Council shall annually consider draft estimates of their expenditure and income for the following financial year. The Council shall formulate proposals in respect of revenue and capital including the use of reserves and sources of funding for the following financial year not later than the end of December each year.
- 11.2 Estimates of expenditure and income falling within particular programme areas shall be prepared by the RFO and submitted for the consideration of the Finance Working Group. The Council shall review the budget not later than the end of January each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Clerk shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.
- 11.3 The full Council shall examine the estimates and may call for such reports, statements or working papers as they may require. The Finance Working Group with the RFO will prepare the proposed budget for the forthcoming financial year for approval by the full Council. The RFO/Finance Working Group shall inform the full Council of any significant variance from the agreed budget.
- 11.4 The Finance Working Group supported by the RFO shall ensure that adequate financial reporting systems are in place to enable budgets are controlled.
- 11.5 The Council shall consider the need for and shall have regard to a three year forecast of Revenue and Capital Receipts and Payments which may be prepared with the annual Budget.
- 11.6 The Clerk after consultation with the Chair 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 Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

12 ANNUAL BUDGET - Capital Estimates

- 12.1 The Council shall annually receive and consider estimates of the capital expenditure proposed for the ensuing year, distinguishing between projects to which the Parish Council is already committed and those not so committed.
- 12.2 These estimates shall be prepared by the Finance Working Group supported by the RFO and presented to the full Council. No commitment concerning a scheme of a capital or exceptional nature shall be entered into before approval by the Parish Council of a report setting out the estimated capital cost and the continuing revenue charge likely to result on completion, together with any other technical or legal reports as necessary.

13 Allotments

- 13.1 In respect of work regarding the Allotments owned by the Parish Council only: any work of an emergency nature (involving e.g., water leaks, drainage failure, or where there is a risk to allotment holders or members of the public, or to avoid further cost) may be

carried out by the Council's nominated contractor without further reference to the Council provided that the cost will not exceed £500.

- 13.2 The incident and details of the work carried out shall be reported as soon as practicable.
- 13.3 Any such emergency work likely to cost up to £500 may be authorised by the Councillor Lead for Allotments, the Chair of the Parish Council, or the Clerk pursuant to clause 38 above.
- 13.4 Non-essential work within the allotments up to a total cost of £500 may be authorised by the Councillor lead for Allotments or the Chair of the Council provided that the expenditure falls within the Budget provision for the financial year.
- 13.5 Non-essential work with an estimated cost exceeding £200 should be referred to the Council for authorisation.

14 Banking

- 14.1 All accounts shall be clearly identified with Briercliffe as part of the title.
- 14.2 No account may be opened or closed without the prior approval of the Parish Council.
- 14.3 No monies shall be paid out of or transferred to or from any account without being so resolved at a full Parish Council Meeting.
- 14.4 All cheques shall be ordered and issued only on the authority of the Parish Council.
- 14.5 The RFO shall be responsible for the preparation and dispatch of cheques and shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody.
- 14.6 All cheques shall be signed by three members of the Council. In exceptional circumstances, the RFO may sign cheques subject to approval by the Finance Lead and/or the Chair of the Council.
- 14.7 No employee or member shall give approval for or sign a cheque in respect of their own expenses or salary.
- 14.8 All cheques shall be issued in sequential order and only one book of cheques per account shall be in use at any one time.
- 14.9 All cheques shall be banked within four working days of receipt.
- 14.10 The RFO shall audit the list of payments into the bank accounts.
- 14.11 The Council may make arrangements for electronic banking. Powers to make and authorise payments may be delegated to the parish council members and RFO in accordance with the bank mandate agreed by the Council.
- 14.12 The RFO may arrange transfers between the Council's bank accounts, as agreed by resolution of a full Parish Council meeting.
- 14.13 The bank reconciliation and cashflow position will be presented at each Council meeting.

15 Payment of Accounts

- 15.1 All invoices, claims and accounts shall be completely checked, such checks being indicated on the account by the initials of the Parish Council member(s) signing or authorising a payment.

15.2 Before certifying the payment, the Parish Council member shall have satisfied themselves that:

15.2.1 The work, goods or services, to which the account relates have been received, carried out examined and approved.

15.2.2 The prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances, credits and tax are correct.

15.2.3 The relevant expenditure has been properly incurred, and is within the relevant estimated provisions

15.2.4 The account has not been previously passed for payment and is proper liability of Briercliffe Parish Council.

16 Payment of Salaries and Wages

16.1 All records relating to payment of salaries and wages, pensions, tax, national Insurance and reimbursement expenses of employees, shall be kept by the RFO in a manner approved by the Finance Working Group.

16.2 The Finance Working Group shall notify the Parish Council of all relevant information for the purpose of keeping the above records (including appointments, resignations, dismissals, absence through sickness or other reason). Time sheets, where appropriate, shall be submitted and certified by the Lead Finance Councillor including in respect of all agency or locum staff.

16.3 The council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers, including by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by Council.

16.4 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting. All salary payments will be supported by a wage slip.

16.5 P45s/P60s and all HMRC paperwork will be completed in a timely manner.

17 Cash Accounts

17.1 The Parish Council will not use a Petty Cash Account.

17.2 Cash payment can be taken for garages, allotments, plots or gardens. A receipt will be issued to the tenant, with a duplicate copy kept in the records of the Council, giving details of the tenant, their plot number, and how much cash was taken.

18 Attendance, Travelling, Subsistence Allowances

18.1 All claims for payment of car allowances, travelling and other expenses to staff shall be submitted and authorised in a form approved by the Finance Working Group. These expenses will be approved prior to the journey being taken.

18.2 If an employee of the Council is using their car for Council business a valid certificate of Business Insurance for each individual will have been seen annually by the Finance Working Group

19 Payments to members

- 19.1 Payments to members, who are entitled to claim subsistence, travelling or other allowances will be made in line with the Expense Policy upon receipt of the prescribed form duly completed.
- 19.2 Authorisation for the above payments shall be taken to mean that the certifying officer is satisfied that the attendances and/or journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred, and that the allowances are properly payable by cheque by the Council.

20 Insurance

- 20.1 The Council will not insure any member to undertake Council business for payment; this is the liability of each individual member.
- 20.2 Payment for transport costs on Council business, other than using own vehicle, must be approved prior to the event and will be reimbursed on production of tickets.
- 20.3 Following the annual risk assessment, the Clerk shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 20.4 The Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances affected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 20.5 The Clerk shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 20.6 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

21 Loans

- 21.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 21.2 The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Policy shall be reviewed at least biennially.
- 21.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 21.4 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The terms and conditions of borrowings shall be reviewed at least annually.
- 21.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk in paper form and online.

22 Security

- 22.1 Each employee/member is responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, etc., under their control.
- 22.2 Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed by the Finance Working Group and shall not be exceeded. Cash must be banked within 4 working days and the transaction witnessed by two people.

22.3 All members and employees shall be responsible for maintaining the proper privacy and security of information held on the computers and the backing up of this information must be undertaken contemporaneously.

22.4 If the RFO leaves the Council's employment, all records and equipment must be delivered within 7 days of end of employment to the person or place designated by the Chair with any passwords, usernames, addresses or other information which is the property of the Council.

23 Inventory

23.1 The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of all items of equipment and assets. All major items of equipment will be clearly and permanently marked for identification. The Asset Register will be maintained showing item location, use, cost, disposal method and realised value. The Asset Register will be presented to the Parish Council for its Annual Meeting and form part of the AGAR.

23.2 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The Clerk shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

23.3 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law.

24 Confidentiality & Data Protection

The Council will ensure that all personal data is handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and relevant legislation.

25 Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to equality and will not unlawfully discriminate under the Equality Act 2010.

26 Monitoring and Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years or earlier if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Operational Requirements
- Updated national guidance

27 Adoption

This policy was adopted by Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council at a meeting held on: 15th January 2026