

FLORE PARISH COUNCIL



INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

The following system has been put in place to minimise significant financial and corporate governance risks to Flore Parish Council.

1. Financial appointments including the bank signatories and the Internal Controllers are agreed at the Annual Meeting in May each year. The Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
2. Details of financial transactions (payee, purpose of expenditure, amount, statutory provision and direct debit payments) are included in the agenda and this is published at least three clear days before the Council meeting both on the Parish Council's notice board and on the website
3. All financial transactions are approved at Council meetings and minuted.
4. Full finance of monthly spend including VAT, is shown on the minutes of the meeting. This also shows expenditure against budget and reserves. Financial papers are received and approved at Council meetings. The bank balance at the end of the month is also recorded in the minutes.
5. A draft budget is presented to the Council in December/January each year showing comparisons with previous years, the current year's actual expenditure and future year projections. Following discussion at the Council meeting, the budget is finalised so that the precept can be submitted in accordance with West Northamptonshire Council's timetable.
6. The Clerk/RFO ensures that the amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the Unitary Council and this is confirmed through the financial reporting.
7. The Clerk/RFO ensures that other receipts are received when due and correctly minutes. The Clerk/RFO is paid monthly and each payment is approved by Council. PAYE/NI is applied and all the relevant returns filed online.
8. Pension registration and payments are also approved by the Council and filed on relevant websites (Local Government Pension Scheme)
9. Appointment of contractors is carried out with reference to the Financial Regulations and minuted accordingly.
10. The Clerk/RFO has had relevant financial management training or experience. Training opportunities for future development are regularly monitored and undertaken where appropriate.
11. All minutes of meetings are sequentially numbered. The signed hard copies are retained, together with an electronic version kept on the Clerk/RFO's computer which is backed up. Minutes are also posted on the website following the meeting but classed as draft until signed off at the following Council meeting.
12. Training opportunities are circulated and discussed, as necessary at Council and the Clerk/RFO and/or Councillors are encouraged to attend where relevant.

13. The Clerk/RFO forwards incoming non agenda communications, if relevant, via email to Councillors. Planning applications are no longer available in hard copy and the Clerk/RFO emailed applications are sent to the planning committee where a link to the application is on the relevant document.

14. Councillors comply with the Code of Conduct and the register of interests is completed annually and updated throughout the year as necessary. Access to the register of members interests is possible via the WNC website with a copy on the Parish Council website.

15. The Clerk/RFO has a contract of employment. Their performance is reviewed annually and their salary for the coming year is approved by the Council. The review includes looking at working arrangements and record keeping.

16. The Council has a publication scheme and processes Freedom of Information requests in accordance with this scheme.

17. The Council subscribes to the Northants CALC Internal Audit Service and an internal audit is conducted on an annual basis.

18. The Council's insurance policy includes a fidelity guarantee limit of £250,000 and public liability/employers liability of £10m each. The cover provided by the insurance policy and the level of premium is reviewed annually.

19. Each agenda includes an item for declaration of member's interests. These are declared verbally and recorded in the minutes.

20. Details of all financial transactions are methodically recorded.

21. Section 137 expenditure 'free resource' is recorded in a separate column within the accounts. The Council does not use S137. It uses General Power of Competence.

22. VAT reclaims are submitted on an annual basis. The amount of VAT refunded is checked by the Clerk/RFO and Internal Controllers.

23. The Council's Financial Regulations are reviewed annually by the Clerk/RFO and any amendments are presented to the Council for approval. The Financial Regulations are published on the website. The Asset Register/Risk Assessments are reviewed annually and presented to the Council for approval as necessary.

Adopted at Council 13th May 2025