

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Cringleford Parish Council

Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, 2003 as amended, imposes a duty on local councils to ensure “that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control”.

Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. The council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the annual return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.

In order for the Parish Council to review the effectiveness of the internal control system there needs to be clarity on the internal controls in place.

Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations document, but the system of controls goes beyond this. A Statement of Internal Controls has therefore been prepared and this is included following this report.

Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations

- The cash book is kept electronically, maintained up to date from original documents (cash received, invoices, payments and direct debits made and cheques as they are prepared).
- The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement monthly.
- A summary sheet with budget against actual expenditure and income is presented at each Parish Council meeting for reference. This is signed by the Chairman and filed as part of the minutes.
- The cash books, payments and receipts and bank reconciliation are reviewed and approved by members of the Parish Council, with reference to the underlying records (bank statements and minutes plus copies of accounts papers etc.) during the Financial Advisory Group meeting at least twice per annum.
- The bank reconciliation is reported to every full Parish Council meeting.
- All payments are reported at each council before they are made unless the RFO has dispensation to make the payment outside the meeting in which case it will be reported at the first meeting after the payment is made.

Financial Regulations

- The Parish Council has adopted financial regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC. The regulations are reviewed annually for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer.
- Official orders/letters are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature.

Payment Controls

- Depending on the nature of the supply, the RFO signs the purchase invoice to indicate that the supply has been received, that the supply has not previously been paid and that the invoice calculations are correct.
- Purchase orders/emails/letters ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable.
- Payments will be listed in the cash books and in accounts files.
- All invoices for payment are listed and presented at the Council meeting. The expenditure is authorised for payment.
- Payments made are listed on the agenda and minutes of the meeting.

- Original invoices are available to the Councillors signing the cheques.
- Cheques will be signed by two Councillors, who are authorised to sign on the council's bank mandate.
- The RFO maintains control of the cheque book at all times, cheques will only be issued and signed for payments approved in Council meetings.
- When invoices are paid by cheque, they are identified by the cheque number and referenced in the cashbook by the cheques number. This is cross checked with the bank statements.

VAT Repayment Claims

- The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council.
- The RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable.
- The RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year.

Income Controls

- The RFO ensures that amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the District Council.
- The RFO ensures that the precept installments are received when due.
- The RFO, assisted by other staff, ensures that other receipts are received when due and correctly calculated.
- Receipts are issued for cash received.
- Income is banked promptly.

Financial Reporting

- A Budget control, comparing actual receipts and payments to the budget and the previous year is prepared on a monthly basis and presented to the Parish Council at every meeting.
- The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council.

Payroll Controls

- All staff are paid under PAYE as employees and the necessary system for HMRC RTI is in place.
- All salaries are set in staff contracts.
- The Clerk will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.
- All Workplace Pensions regulations are adhered to by the Clerk and reported to the Financial Advisory Group.

Clerk's Expenses

- The clerk submits a request for reimbursement of monies owing by way of an expense list at each meeting.
- Expenses are paid by cheque and the expense list treated as an invoice for accounting purposes.

Petty Cash

- The Clerk maintains a float of approximately £60 for small expenses. Reimbursement is made by prior authorization by the Clerk and on production of a receipt. Reimbursements are not made without relevant receipts. The majority of expenses from April 2016 will be spent on the council's procurement card.

Purchase Card

- The corporate purchase card issued is specifically restricted to the Clerks use and is restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £750 [in line with financial regulation 11.1.(i)] unless authorised by Council in writing before any order is placed.
- Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council at each meeting within the monthly accounts. The statement will be fully reconciled each month and paid in full each month by direct debit.

Asset Control

- The RFO maintains a full asset register.
- The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.