

Forncett Parish Council

Statement and Review of Internal Control

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).
- A copy of the cash book is independently maintained by the Chairman and the balance of the bank accounts verified between the Chairman and the RFO on a monthly basis,
- The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement monthly.
- The bank reconciliation is reported to the full Parish Council and minuted as such.
- 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.
- The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work.
- 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.
- Payments will be listed in cheque number order in the cash books and in accounts files.

- All invoices for payment are listed and presented at the Council meeting. The expenditure is to be 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.
- BACS payments are approved in Council meetings and then authorised online by two authorised signatories.
- 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 ensures that other receipts (deposit interest, allotment and land rents) are received when due and correctly calculated.
- Income is banked promptly.

Financial Reporting

- The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council.

Payroll Controls

- The Clerk is paid under PAYE as an employee and the necessary system for HMRCRTI is in place.
- The Clerk's salary is set as per their contract.
- The Clerk will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.

Office and Clerk's Expenses

- The clerk submits a request for reimbursement of monies owing by way of a summary of expenses with appropriate receipts twice a year.
- Expenses are paid by bank transfer and the expense summary treated as an invoice for accounting purposes.

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.