



# Slinfold Parish Council

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE

**These rules are supplemental to, and do not in any way override, the Parish Council's Standing Orders &/or Financial Regulations.**

### 1. Membership and Meetings

- a) Membership of the committee will be as decided at the Annual Council Meeting in May each year, subject to the proviso that the chairman and vice-chairman of the Parish Council and chairmen of committees shall, in any event, be *ex officio* members.
- b) The committee shall be subject to a quorum of half of its members or three whichever is the greater.
- c) The committee shall meet 3 to 4 times a year.

### 2. Conduct of Meetings

- a) All meetings of the Finance Committee will be convened in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders.
- b) Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk to the Council, another member of staff or a member of the committee.

### 3. Powers

The committee shall be empowered to make any financial decisions on behalf of the Parish Council subject to the following exceptions:

- (1) Determination of the Council's overall borrowing limit.
- (2) Determination of the Council's short-term borrowing limit.
- (3) Determination of the amount of interest payable by the Parish Council at rates variable by a lender or which are controlled by external factors.
- (4) Issue of a precept.
- (5) Final approval of the Council's overall budget and reserves policy.
- (6) Amendment of the Council's financial regulations or standing orders.
- (7) Any single item of expenditure (including aggregated stage payments) in excess of £7,500, any project budget in excess of £7,500, or any contract, order or agreement leading to such expenditure, unless

already provided for by way of an agreed maximum approved by Full Council, or an overall project-specific budget or earmarked reserve approved by Full Council.

- (8) Any expenditure which would result in the sum total of the Council's overall net expenditure budget and any additional expenditure approved by Full Council being exceeded by more than £10,000, or which would deplete uncommitted reserves to a level more than £5,000 below the level specified in the Council's reserves policy.
- (9) Any other restrictions or financial constraints imposed by Full Council.

- a. The committee shall be empowered to approve legal documents on behalf of the Parish Council subject to the proviso that the sale, disposal, acquisition or transfer of title of any land or buildings regardless of value, or any other assets valued in excess of £7,500, shall be authorised by Full Council.
- b. The committee shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Parish Council in all matters concerning staff pay and conditions of employment, subject only to the restrictions above.
- c. The committee shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of tenders, quotations, contracts and appointment of contractors, subject always to the expenditure restrictions outlined and to compliance with relevant standing orders and financial regulations.

Notes:

- (1) Provided Full Council has approved the maximum amount and purpose of the expenditure, approval of a quotation or tender, or appointment of a contractor, shall be at the discretion of the committee.
- (2) Where an existing contract is being renewed or awarded to a different contractor or contractors, Full Council approval shall only be required if costs will increase by more than £7,500 as a result.

- d. The committee shall be empowered to determine fees to be charged by the Council.
- e. The committee shall be empowered to appoint an internal auditor on the Parish Council's behalf.
- f. Subject to compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the committee shall be empowered to approve risk assessments and policies and procedures for controlling risk on the Parish Council's behalf.
- g. Subject to compliance with standing orders, financial regulations, the expenditure restrictions outlined above, and the proviso that any covenants or leases shall require final approval by Full Council, the committee shall be empowered to act on the Parish Council's behalf in respect of legal and financial arrangements relating to the Cherry Tree, KGV and Six Acres sports and recreational facilities, and the management and maintenance of those facilities.
- h. The committee shall be empowered to act on the Council's behalf in respect of the Freedom of Information Act and GDPR.
- i. The committee shall be empowered to take appropriate action in respect of alleged breaches in the Code of Conduct. This will involve liaison with the District Council's Monitoring Officer

## 5. Responsibilities and Main Functions

- a. The committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the Council's finances and resources are managed in a responsible and prudent manner, and assessing financial, contractual and organisational risk and the impact of expenditure on the Parish Council's reserves and long-term plans on an ongoing basis.
- b. The committee shall examine the Council's accounts and the annual return.
- c. The committee shall monitor the income and expenditure of the Parish Council and its committees throughout the year, ensuring that the amounts concerned are consistent with approved budgets and that any income shortfalls or expenditure in excess of budgets will not adversely affect the Council's overall financial position.

- d. The committee shall consider budget proposals from the Clerk and committees, and agree upon an overall budget, reserves policy and precept requirement every year subject to final approval by Full Council.
- e. Subject to approval of amounts in excess of £7,500 (or £7,500 per annum in the case of transfers to earmarked reserves) by Full Council, the committee shall delegate spending powers to standing committees by way of:
  - (1) An overall discretionary budget for each financial year.
  - (2) Additional budgets in respect of specific projects as appropriate.
  - (3) Earmarked reserves.
- f. All members of the committee shall **(if they choose to be)** be authorised signatories on the Parish Council's bank and on-line accounts; any two to sign.
- g. The committee shall examine the reports of internal and external auditors, ensuring that any recommendations are complied with and that any shortcomings highlighted in the reports are addressed as soon as possible.
- h. Subject to the provisions of any leases or other legal agreements, the committee shall be responsible for overseeing the maintenance, management, regulation, security and development of Cherry Tree, KGV and Six Acres sports and recreational facilities, and ensuring that they are fit for purpose and maintained in such condition as to be safe and welcoming to visitors.
- j. The committee shall carry out a formal overall review of risk assessments at least annually, ensuring that any unacceptable risks or shortcomings in assessment are addressed as soon as possible.
- k. The committee shall ensure that the Parish Council maintains adequate levels of insurance cover, reviewing the schedule of cover annually on renewal.
- l. The committee shall ensure that the Parish Council's standing orders and financial regulations are reviewed from time to time, submitting any amendments to Full Council for approval.
- m. The committee shall ensure that the Council has in place formal grievance and disciplinary procedures for its staff.
- n. The committee shall ensure that proper records are kept of the Parish Council's properties and significant assets.
- o. The committee shall ensure that all meetings of the Parish Council and its committees are conducted in accordance with standing orders, financial regulations and terms of reference, and with due regard to NALC guidelines on chairmanship.
- p. The committee shall take whatever advice it deems necessary to ensure that the Council is fully aware of its legal rights and obligations.
- q. In addition to all of the above, the committee shall put in place whatever internal controls it considers necessary to ensure that the Council's resources are properly managed and that rules and regulations are complied with.
- r. The committee shall review the effectiveness of the Council's internal control and internal audit annually.

### **Establishment**

- s. New councillors – the committee shall make recommendations regarding councillor vacancies;
- t. the committee may make recommendations for the number and purpose of Council committees and working groups
- u. The committee shall be responsible for the review of and recommendations to the full PC regarding: -
  - a. Salaries, pensions and pay awards
  - b. Staff appraisal and disciplinary matters
  - c. Job descriptions, benchmarking staff roles and recruitment