

RINGMER PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
MAY 2022

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the parish Ringmer Parish Council at its meeting held on 24th May 2022.

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1. General

1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by Ringmer Parish Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council. Financial regulations are one of Ringmer Parish Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with Ringmer Parish Council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

1.2. Ringmer Parish Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that Ringmer Parish Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of Ringmer Parish Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3. Ringmer Parish Council's accounting control systems must include measures:

- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how Ringmer Parish Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, Ringmer Parish Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.7. Members of Ringmer Parish Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Ringmer Parish Councillor into disrepute.

1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by Ringmer Parish Council. [The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Ringmer Parish Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.]

¹ Model Standing Orders for Ringmer Parish Councils (2018 Edition) is available from NALC (©NALC 2018)

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1.9. The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of Ringmer Parish Council;
- administers Ringmer Parish Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- maintains the accounting records of Ringmer Parish Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- assists Ringmer Parish Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by Ringmer Parish Council.

1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain Ringmer Parish Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for Ringmer Parish Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by Ringmer Parish Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of the assets and liabilities of Ringmer Parish Council; and
- wherever relevant, a record of Ringmer Parish Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.

1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of Ringmer Parish Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
- procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
- identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
- procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to Ringmer Parish Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

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1.13. Ringmer Parish Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (Ringmer Parish Council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full Ringmer Parish Council only.

1.14. In addition, Ringmer Parish Council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Ringmer Parish Council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of [£5,000]; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or ‘the regulations’ shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term ‘proper practice’ or ‘proper practices’ shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Ringmer Parish Councils - a Practitioners’ Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Ringmer Parish Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of Ringmer Parish Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman [or a cheque signatory] shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank

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statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by Ringmer Parish Council [Finance Committee].

2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of Ringmer Parish Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to Ringmer Parish Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.4. Ringmer Parish Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of Ringmer Parish Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to Ringmer Parish Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by Ringmer Parish Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as Ringmer Parish Council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by Ringmer Parish Council in accordance with proper practices.

2.6. The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of Ringmer Parish Council;
- report to Ringmer Parish Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of Ringmer Parish Council

2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for Ringmer Parish Council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any Ringmer Parish Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any

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notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Ringmer Parish Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning

[3.1. Each committee (if any) shall review its three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to Ringmer Parish Council not later than the end of [November] each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.]

3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than [month], prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the [relevant committee and the] Ringmer Parish Council.

3.3. Ringmer Parish Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to Ringmer Parish Council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.4. Ringmer Parish Council shall fix the precept (Ringmer Parish Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Ringmer Parish Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- Ringmer Parish Council for all items over [£5,000];
- a duly delegated committee of Ringmer Parish Council for items over [£500]; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Ringmer Parish Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below [£500].

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

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4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Ringmer Parish Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in [October] for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Ringmer Parish Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Ringmer Parish Council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of [£500]. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to Ringmer Parish Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless Ringmer Parish Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with Ringmer Parish Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide Ringmer Parish Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of [£100] or [15%] of the budget.

4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Ringmer Parish Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

5.1. Ringmer Parish Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by Ringmer Parish Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. [Ringmer Parish Council shall seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.]

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5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Ringmer Parish Council [or finance committee]. Ringmer Parish Council / committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of Ringmer Parish Council [or finance committee]. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by Ringmer Parish Council.

5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Ringmer Parish Council [or Finance Committee] meeting.

5.5. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:

a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Ringmer Parish Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Ringmer Parish Council [or finance committee];

b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Ringmer Parish Council [or finance committee]; or

c) fund transfers within Ringmer Parish Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of [£10,000], provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Ringmer Parish Council [or finance committee].

5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Ringmer Parish Council [,or a duly authorised committee,] may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Ringmer Parish Council [or Finance Committee].

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5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Ringmer Parish Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Ringmer Parish Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council.

5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by Ringmer Parish Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.10. Ringmer Parish Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

5.11. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6. Instructions for the making of payments

6.1. Ringmer Parish Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, Ringmer Parish Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to Ringmer Parish Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Ringmer Parish Council [or duly delegated committee].

6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Ringmer Parish Council or committee shall be signed by [one] two member[s] of Ringmer Parish Council [and countersigned by the Clerk,] in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

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6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Ringmer Parish Council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to Ringmer Parish Council [or Finance Committee] at the next convenient meeting.

6.7. If thought appropriate by Ringmer Parish Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Ringmer Parish Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council at least every two years.

6.8. If thought appropriate by Ringmer Parish Council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Ringmer Parish Council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council at least every two years.

6.9. If thought appropriate by Ringmer Parish Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to Ringmer Parish Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council at least every two years.

6.10. If thought appropriate by Ringmer Parish Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to Ringmer Parish Council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Ringmer Parish Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other Ringmer Parish Councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of Ringmer Parish Council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

6.12. No employee or Ringmer Parish Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of Ringmer Parish Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by Ringmer Parish Council or a duly delegated committee.

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6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

6.14. Ringmer Parish Council, and any members using computers for Ringmer Parish Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by Ringmer Parish Council shall identify a number of Ringmer Parish Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Ringmer Parish Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

6.17. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by [two of] the Clerk [the RFO] [a member]. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk [and the RFO] and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of [£500] unless authorised by Ringmer Parish Council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by Ringmer Parish Council [Finance Committee]. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the [Ringmer Parish Council] [relevant committee] and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the [Ringmer Parish Council] [relevant committee].

6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by Ringmer Parish Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk [and RFO] and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

6.21. Ringmer Parish Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk [or RFO] (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

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7. Payment of salaries

7.1. As an employer, Ringmer Parish Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers 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 salary rates shall be as agreed by Ringmer Parish Council, or duly delegated committee.

7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Ringmer Parish Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the [Ringmer Parish Council] [relevant committee].

7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- a) by any Ringmer Parish Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- b) by the internal auditor;
- c) by the external auditor; or
- d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to Ringmer Parish Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Ringmer Parish Council.

7.8. Before employing interim staff, Ringmer Parish Council must consider a full business case.

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8. Loans and investments

8.1. All borrowings shall be affected in the name of Ringmer Parish Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Ringmer Parish Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full Ringmer Parish Council.

8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Ringmer Parish Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Ringmer Parish Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

8.3. Ringmer Parish Council will arrange with Ringmer Parish Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of Ringmer Parish Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk or RFO.

8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of Ringmer Parish Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Ringmer Parish Council policy.

8.5. Ringmer Parish Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by Ringmer Parish Council at least annually.

8.6. All investments of money under the control of Ringmer Parish Council shall be in the name of Ringmer Parish Council.

8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. Income

9.1. The collection of all sums due to Ringmer Parish Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered, or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by Ringmer Parish Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to Ringmer Parish Council.

9.3. Ringmer Parish Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.

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9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to Ringmer Parish Council and shall be written off in the year.

9.5. All sums received on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with Ringmer Parish Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council.

9.8. 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 financial year end.

9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by Ringmer Parish Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by Ringmer Parish Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

[9.10. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to Ringmer Parish Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Ringmer Parish Council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below).]

10. Orders for work, goods and services

10.1. 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.

10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer 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 in Regulation 11.1 below.

10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council.

10.5. 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 RFO shall ensure that the statutory

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authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. Contracts

11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;
- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by Ringmer Parish Council;
- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Ringmer Parish Council); and
- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) Where Ringmer Parish Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, Ringmer Parish Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².

c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)³.

² The Regulations require Ringmer Parish Councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³ Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)
- b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)

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d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to Ringmer Parish Council.

e) 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 in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of Ringmer Parish Council.

g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders[],⁴[insert reference of Ringmer Parish Council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 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 (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below [£3,000] and above [£100] the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

i) Ringmer Parish Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

j) Should it occur that Ringmer Parish Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and Ringmer Parish Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

[12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works]

[12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).]

⁴ Based on NALC's Model Standing Order 18d ©NALC 2018

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[12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to Ringmer Parish Council.]

[12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by Ringmer Parish Council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, Ringmer Parish Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

[13. Stores and equipment]

[13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.]

[13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.]

[13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.]

[13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.]

14. Assets, properties and estates

14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by Ringmer Parish Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by Ringmer Parish 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.

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of Ringmer Parish Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed [£250].

14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of Ringmer Parish Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Ringmer Parish Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Ringmer Parish Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Ringmer Parish Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning

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permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Ringmer Parish Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Ringmer Parish Council with a full business case.

14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. Insurance

15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on Ringmer Parish Council's insurers [in consultation with the Clerk].

[15.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.]

15.3. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by Ringmer Parish Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.4. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Ringmer Parish Council at the next available meeting.

15.5. All appropriate members and employees of Ringmer Parish Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by Ringmer Parish Council, or duly delegated committee.

16. Charities

16.1. Where Ringmer Parish Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17. Risk management

17.1. Ringmer Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare, for approval by Ringmer Parish Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of Ringmer Parish Council. Risk policy statements and

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consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by Ringmer Parish Council at least annually.

17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by Ringmer Parish Council.

18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

18.1. It shall be the duty of Ringmer Parish Council to review the Financial Regulations of Ringmer Parish Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise Ringmer Parish Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

18.2. Ringmer Parish Council may, by resolution of Ringmer Parish Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Ringmer Parish Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Ringmer Parish Council.

The Model Financial Regulations templates were produced by the National Association of Local Ringmer Parish Councils (NALC) in July 2019 for the purpose of its member Ringmer Parish Councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.