

Tur Langton Parish Council

Internet Banking Policy

Adopted 4/5/21 for review May 2022

Background

The Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014 came into effect on 12th March 2014. This Legislative Reform Order repeals the statutory requirement for two elected members to sign cheques and other orders for payment. The removal of this particular legal requirement will enable Parish Councils to take an overall approach to how it controls its money as well as taking advantage of modern technology including internet banking.

The Parish Council acknowledges the need to maintain robust controls on payments as an integrated part of its overall financial control system.

Account details

The Parish Council has an account with **HSBC Unity Trust Bank**. This account can be organised with the bank to require internet payments to be set up by one signatory and then authorised by two-signatories up to a certain limit. This is in accordance with the guidance on page 14 of the document "The Good Councillor's Guide to Finance and Transparency" where it states – "*Where electronic banking is used, arrangements should ensure that at least two people are involved in any transaction, one of whom must be a councillor*".

Account signatories

The following are signatories on the account:

- Cllr T Bladon (with internet access, can view account, submit payments and authorise)
- Cllr J Haynes
- Cllr P Officer (with internet access, can view account, submit payments and authorise)
- Cllr C Staveley (with internet access, can view account, submit payments and authorise)
- The Clerk (with internet access, can view account and submit payments but cannot authorise)

Internet Banking Procedure

Payments will be made by internet banking where possible. The following sentences (a – h-i) set out the principles and procedures of operation of the online account with particular attention to the raising of payment requests and their authorisation. The actual process of operating the online account will be the subject to the rules and security authorisation process of the bank:

- a. The Council's Financial Regulations 6.9 to 6.16 will be adhered to for internet banking
- b. All orders for payment will be verified for accuracy by the Parish Clerk
- c. A schedule of all payments shall be prepared by the Parish Clerk and presented to each meeting of the Council together with any supporting invoices or other documentation for approval. The approved schedule will be initialled by the Chair of the meeting.
- d. The Council also maintains a list of payments occurring on a regular basis, in line with Financial Regulations 5.6 – 5.7. All such payments are minuted at the next Parish Council meeting.
- ~~e. Once the Schedule of Payments has been authorised or when a regular payment is due for payment, the Parish Clerk will set up the payments and inform one of the Councillor signatories with internet access by email. For payments in category d above the clerk will attach invoices to the email and copy one of the other councillors who is a signatory in to ensure two signatories have seen the invoices.~~

Once the schedule of payment has been authorised ((c) above) or when a regular payment is due ((d) above), the clerk will establish two signatories with internet access who are available to authorise the payments, where possible avoiding the councillor who is responsible for checking the bank reconciliations. The clerk will then set up the payments and inform the two signatories by email. For payments in category (d) above the clerk will attach invoices to the email.

- f. On receipt of the email the Councillors will authorise the payment(s), cross referencing with the schedule which was agreed at the meeting (Point (c) above) or the list of regular payments (Point (d) above) to ensure there are no discrepancies.
- g. Where other payments may be required in between meetings the Parish Clerk will establish two available signatories as in e above and email copies of the invoices requiring payment to one of the Councillor signatories with internet access them before setting up the payments. The Councillors will then authorise the payment as in (f) above.
- h. All payments authorised between meetings will be done so in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. If such a payment requires authorisation by the chair (Financial Regulation 4.1), the email from the chair containing the authorisation will be forwarded to the councillors authorising the online payment with the associated papers (point (g) above)

- i. If the clerk is not available, a councillor will submit payments and two councillors will authorise the payments.