PYECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. **General**

1.1 These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of financial management they may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.

1.2 The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the Council. The RFO, under direction from the Parish Council, will be responsible for the financial administration of Pyecombe Parish Council.

1.3 The RFO will be responsible for the production of financial management information.

1.4 The RFO will ensure that the accounting records of this Council are maintained and kept up to date.

1.5 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in Governance and Accountability in local Councils in England and Wales – a Practitioners' Guide which is published jointly by NALC and SLCC and updated from time to time.

2 **Annual Estimates**

2.1 Each Committee shall formulate and submit proposals to the Council in respect of revenue and capital including the use of reserves and sources of funding for the following financial year not later than the end of November each year.

2.2 Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments shall be prepared each year by the RFO in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.

2.3 Council shall review the budget not later than the end of January each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.

2.4 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

2.5 The Council shall consider the need for and shall have regard to a three year forecast of Revenue and Capital Receipts and Payments which may be prepared at the same time as the annual Budget.

2.6 There should be an annual rolling review of the Council's Financial Plan.

3. **Budgetary Control**

3.1 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date.

3.2 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available.

3.3 All works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. **Accounting and Audit.**

4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

4.2 The RFO shall complete the annual financial statements of the Council, including the council's annual return, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.

4.3 The RFO shall complete the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as required under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014) and shall submit the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

4.4 The RFO shall ensure that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.

4.5 The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the Council, and their appointment shall be reviewed annually. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing a minimum of one annual written report in respect of each financial year. In order to demonstrate objectivity and independence, the Internal Auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.

4.6 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any Notices and statements of account required under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

4.7 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

4.8 The scope of the Internal Audit should include Trust funds for which the Council is accountable.

5. **Banking Arrangements and Cheques.**

5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.

5.2 A schedule of the payments required, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to Council. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council and shall be initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. If more appropriate the detail may be shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.

5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4 shall be signed by two members of Council.

5.4 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.

6 **Payment of Accounts**

6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO. The RFO shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

6.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.

6.4 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 Council, where the RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.

7. **Payment of Salaries**

7.1 As an employer, the 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 salaries shall be as agreed by Council.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.

8. **Income**

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

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

8.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the RFO.

8.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council.

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

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

8.7 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 yearly coinciding with the financial year end.

9. **Orders for Work, Goods and Services.**

9.1 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.

9.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

9.3 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 (i) below.

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

10. **Contracts**

10.1 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 these regulations shall 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 solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
(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 the Council;

(v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council);
(vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.

(b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract for 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 Council shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.

(c) 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 the Council.

(d) 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.

(e)The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quote or estimate.

11. **Payments under Contracts for Building or other Construction Works.**

11.1 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 with holding as may be greed in the particular contract).

11.2 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

12 **Stores and Equipment**

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

12.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked.