

Acklington Parish Council – Financial Regulations (England)

1. General

1.1 These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of Acklington Parish Council and may only be amended by resolution of the Council.

1.2 The Council must ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective, in accordance with:

- The Local Government Act 1972
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

1.3 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Accounting and Audit

2.1 The Council shall ensure that accounting records are kept in accordance with proper practices set out in:

- Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (latest edition)

2.2 The Council shall complete the **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)** each year.

2.3 The Council shall appoint an independent and competent internal auditor.

2.4 External audit arrangements shall comply with the requirements of Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

2.5 The RFO shall ensure:

- Bank reconciliations are carried out regularly
 - Accounting statements are prepared annually
 - All statutory deadlines are met
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3. Budget Setting and Precept

3.1 The Council shall prepare an annual budget to support the setting of the precept under Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3.2 The budget shall take into account:

- Expected income and expenditure
- Reserve levels
- Risk assessment

3.3 The precept demand shall be issued to the billing authority (e.g. Northumberland County Council).

4. Budgetary Control

4.1 No expenditure may be incurred unless it is:

- Within an approved budget, or
- Specifically authorised by the Council

4.2 The RFO shall provide regular budget monitoring reports.

4.3 The Council may approve virements between budget headings.

5. Banking and Payments

5.1 The Council shall maintain bank accounts in its own name.

5.2 All payments shall:

- Be supported by proper documentation
- Be authorised by the Council or under delegated authority

5.3 Electronic payments are permitted, provided:

- They are approved by at least two authorised signatories
- Adequate internal controls are in place

5.4 A schedule of payments shall be reported to each meeting.

6. Salaries and PAYE

6.1 Salaries shall be paid in accordance with contracts of employment and national pay agreements where applicable.

6.2 The Council shall comply with:

- HMRC PAYE regulations
- Pension requirements under auto-enrolment legislation

6.3 The RFO shall ensure all deductions are correctly made and paid.

7. Procurement and Contracts

7.1 The Council shall comply with:

- The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (where thresholds apply)

7.2 Financial thresholds:

- Up to £1,000: RFO may authorise within budget
- £1,000–£5,000: At least 2 quotations
- Over £5,000: At least 3 quotations or formal tender

7.3 Contracts must be approved by the Council and recorded.

8. Income

8.1 The RFO is responsible for the collection of all income.

8.2 Income must be:

- Properly recorded
- Promptly banked

8.3 The Council shall minimise cash handling.

9. Loans and Investments

9.1 The Council shall comply with:

- The Local Government Act 2003

9.2 Borrowing requires approval from the Secretary of State.

9.3 Investments must prioritise:

- Security
- Liquidity

- Compliance with statutory guidance
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10. Assets and Property

10.1 The Council shall maintain an up-to-date asset register in line with proper practices.

10.2 Assets shall be:

- Insured
- Regularly inspected

10.3 Disposal of assets must comply with Section 127 of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. Insurance

11.1 The Council shall maintain adequate insurance cover for:

- Public liability
- Employers' liability
- Assets

11.2 Insurance shall be reviewed annually.

12. Risk Management and Internal Control

12.1 The Council shall maintain a system of internal control in accordance with:

- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

12.2 This shall include:

- Regular bank reconciliations
 - Separation of duties (where practical)
 - Internal audit review
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13. Transparency and Accountability

13.1 The Council shall comply with:

- The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

13.2 The Council shall publish:

- Annual accounts
 - AGAR documents
 - Public rights notices
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14. Review of Financial Regulations

14.1 These regulations shall be reviewed at least annually.

14.2 Amendments must be approved by full Council.