

INTERNET BANKING POLICY

INTERNET BANKING AND ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

Payment of invoices online saves time and money. The Parish Council banks with Unity Trust Bank. The Council resolved that all members of the Finance and Governance Committee *must* be members of the banks mandate, as well as other specific Councillors on the Council and be responsible for the authorisation of all payments made, accompanied by an invoice at all times.

The controls and approval of payments are the same as the cheque system. The Clerk/CEO & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) or the Projects Officer may 'view, submit and or authorise' a payment on-line. Councillors may 'view and authorise' the payments entered by the Clerk/CEO & RFO or the Projects Officer but may not set up a beneficiary or payment themselves.

The Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer will make payments by cheque as and when necessary, following the controls and approvals within Financial Regulations but will pay online whenever possible.

The Clerk/CEO RFO will continue to provide all Bank Statements and reconciliations from the accounting package to the Finance and Governance Committee when they meet.

Councillors will continue to check monthly payments and reconcile them to the bank on a rota basis.

The Parish Council has two accounts with Unity Trust Bank – Current and Deposit:

1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Administrator. The Clerk/CEO RFO and the Projects Officer will have 'view and submit only' authorisation and will be able to transfer funds between accounts held with the same bank.
2. The Bank Mandate is approved by the Council and it shall require two signatories, of which one must be a member of the Finance and Governance Committee together with any one other approved signatory. All signatories so agreed will have 'view and approve only' authorisation on those accounts.
3. Access to internet banking accounts will be directly to the bank's log-in page as per the Financial Regulations, and not through a search engine or e-mail link.
4. Remembered or saved passwords must not be used on any computer/laptop/chrome book for Council banking work. Breach of this requirement will be treated as a very serious matter.

5. The Council, and those Signatories using computers for the Council's internet banking, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used at all times. Signatories may request the Council's IT service contractor install and annually update such software on chrome books supplied by the Council only.
6. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
7. New beneficiaries and changes to beneficiary details used for internet banking must be supported by hard copy or email notification for checking an authorisation by two Signatories.
8. All transactions require two Signatories to authorise.
9. As per the Internal Auditor's recommendation Councillors *must* confirm that they have checked all payments against the invoices attached to the email and authorised the payment through the bank.
10. Direct Debits will be reported to the Finance & Governance Committee or Council and signed off before being set up with the bank. Two Signatories will also apply.
11. Payment for items may be made by internet banking transfer, BACS or CHAPS provided that evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
12. Standing Orders will not be used but the Financial Regulations must be adhered to at all times and take precedent over this policy and any other financial policy.

PROCEDURE

Procedure for Setting Up Beneficiaries:

- i. Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer enters the details of the beneficiary online.
- ii. Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer emails a scanned copy of the BACS details of the beneficiary to the Signatories.
- iii. Two Signatories check the details and authorise the beneficiary

Procedure for Amending Beneficiary details:

- i. Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer enters the amended details of the beneficiary online.
- ii. Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer emails a scanned copy of the new BACS details of the beneficiary to the Signatories.
- iii. Two Signatories check the details and authorise the beneficiary amendment.

Procedure for Paying Beneficiaries:

- i. All invoices and requests for payment will be verified for accuracy by the RFO.
- ii. The Clerk/CEO RFO or the Projects Officer enters the details of the payment into the bank.
- iii. Wherever possible, payments will be made using ~~the~~ online banking.
- iv. Two Signatories will confirm the payments online.
- v. All invoices will be emailed to back up each payment for authorisation.
- vi. On a rota basis one Councillor, will be called upon to authorise payments for each month. A second councillor will also authorise the payments to confirm that the second check has been carried out.
- vii. Signatories may not authorise a payment to themselves.
- viii. All requests for payment will be emailed to the Signatories.