WHITEGATE

AND

MARTON

PARISH

COUNCIL

FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS (FINANCIAL REGULATIONS)

REVISED May 2026

WHITEGATE & MARTON PARISH COUNCIL.
FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS.

1. General.

1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transaction of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of Whitegate & Marton Parish Council at their monthly meeting.

1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council's financial affairs.

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

2. Financial statement and budget control.

2.1 The annual budget is to be approved no later than the December meeting to enable the Cheshire West and Chester Council to be advised of the Whitegate & Marton PC precept in the following January. RFO to prepare a provisional financial statement for the October meeting of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council which includes a forecast for the balances at the end of the current year comparisons of receipts and payments for the preceding financial year.

2.2 The October financial statement describes the financial position after 6 months of the current financial year. The forecast for the end of the financial year balances is made on the basis of known financial commitments for the second half of the year. The previous year's payments, receipts and year-end balances are also shown.

2.3 Receipts and payments are detailed into appropriate sections with the VAT items shown separately. This is done in the receipts and payments spreadsheet. Petty cash balances and bank reconciliation is to be done on a spreadsheet. In line with transparency requirements from July 15 items over £100 must be published on the website (annually)

2.4 All transactions including petty cash should be supported by the relevant receipts and invoice. Where VAT is involved a proper receipt giving the date, VAT amount and VAT number of the supplier or recipient must be obtained. For cheque payments, the relevant receipt should be given a voucher number and this number entered in the relevant column in the receipts and payments book.

2.5 The overall timetable is therefore:-

October – internal check of accounts by a named Whitegate & Marton Parish Councillor and the RFO.

October meeting – a 6 months financial report is to be presented and considered by the Whitegate & Marton PC.

December meeting – 6 months financial report approved (if not done at the October or November meeting) and the precept for the following year agreed.

April / May meeting – final year accounts presented to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

May meeting – final year-end accounts approved at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

May/June – internal audit check to be carried out between the internal auditor and RFO.

May/June – display final accounts, annual governance statement, internal auditor report and list of transactions over £100.

2.6 The RFO will also present to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council a break down of the expenses during the year to make sure the spending is in line with that planned, this will be presented at regular intervals.

2.7 The clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council for carrying out urgent repair/replacement work that needs to be done at once, whether or not there is a budgetary provision to do so but with a limit of £150. The clerk shall report back to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council as soon as possible thereafter.

2.8 Any unspent provisions in the budget cannot be carried forward into the next financial year.

3. Accounting and Audit.

3.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

3.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year for reporting on them to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

3.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the accounts for Whitegate & Marton Parish Council contained in the annual return and for submitting the annual return for approval and authorisation by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, or set by the auditor.

3.4 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 as amended. Any officer or member of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall, if the RFO or internal auditor requires, make available such documents of the Whitegate & Marton Parish 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 explanations as the RFO or internal auditor considers necessary for that purpose.

3.5 The internal auditor shall carry out the work required by the RFO, or by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the internal auditors report section of the annual return as compiled annually by the audit commission. The internal auditor should be competent and independent of the operation of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

3.6 The RFO shall make arrangement for the opportunity for the inspection of the accounts and books as required by the audit commission act 1998 section 15 and the Accounts and Audit Regulation 2011.

3.7 The RFO shall bring to the attention of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Councillors any correspondence received from the internal or external auditors.

3.8 The clerk shall be responsible for keeping all invoices and receipts and for maintaining records of all the financial transactions of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

4. Banking arrangements, payment of accounts and cheques.

4.1 Whitegate & Marton Parish Council has a bank account with the Lloyds TSB, a National Savings Account and Barclays online banking account.

4.2 Apart from petty cash payments, a cheque/BACS or other order drawn on the council's bankers shall affect all payments.

4.3 In relation to the online banking account (agreed current account for April 2023 onwards), payment by way of bank transfer is approved whereby one person will process the payment online and require the approval of another person to authorise payment prior to release to ensure separation of duties. Signatories (Cllr Chris Leech, Julie Ellis (Clerk) and Cllr Keith Rayner).

4.4 All invoices shall be examined by the clerk and presented to Whitegate & Marton Parish Council for approval at each monthly meeting and signed by the chairman at that meeting.

4.5 If a payment is necessary to avoid interest charges before the next meeting the clerk may take the necessary steps to settle such invoices and then provide details to Whitegate & Marton Parish Councillors at the next meeting.

4.6 Three Whitegate & Marton Parish Councillors are required to sign cheques drawn on the current bank account and the cheque stub initialled by the same three councillors. The stub should also say what the cheque is for. All current Councillors are signatories.

4.7 In relation to the online banking account (due to bank restrictions) two signatures are required on the cheque book.

4.8 The Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall provide petty cash to the clerk for the purpose of operational and other expenses for which vouchers or receipts must be kept. – *Present Clerk prefers to have reimbursement of expenses on a quarterly basis rather than retain petty cash.*

4.9 Income received must not be paid into the petty cash account but must be separately banked and details shown on the pay in slip stub.

4.10 Petty cash payments to the clerk shall be shown separately for approval by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council four times a year.

4.11 Payment of the clerk's wages shall be made four times a year *(net of National Insurance and Tax)* as agreed and be paid by bank transfer. PAYE system in operation and national insurance contributions shall be paid in accordance with the payroll records.

5. Loans and Investments.

5.1 All investment of money under the control of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall be in the name of Whitegate & Marton Parish Council. Any certificates and documents issued for such an investment shall be retained by the RFO.

5.2 All borrowings shall be affected in the name of Whitegate & Marton Parish Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. The Whitegate & Marton Parish Council, as to the terms and purpose, shall approve an application for borrowing approval.

6. Income.

6.1 The clerk shall bank all sums of money received on behalf of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

6.2 A reference indication of the origin of each cheque shall be entered on the paying in slip.

6.3 The RFO shall complete the VAT Return as soon as possible. Any VAT to be claimed back in accordance with the VAT act 1994 section 33 will be made annually to coincide with the financial year-end *(subject to minimum claim).*

7. Orders for work, goods and services.

7.1 For all work, goods and services Whitegate & Marton Parish Council will require an official order or letter unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. The clerk will keep all copies of orders or letters.

7.2 To help obtain value for money and best terms it is recommended that three quotes or estimates be obtained from three different suppliers for all goods and services over £500.

7.3 The lawful nature of any proposed purchase shall be verified by the RFO and the statutory authority reported to the meeting at which the order is approved. The minutes of the meeting must also show the power being used.

***8.* Contracts.**

8.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

(a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulation and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulation 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 good 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 the Vice Chairman of the Council);
(vi) For good or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at fixed price.

(b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £5,000 in value for the supply of good or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods materials, works or specialist services as are expected as set out in paragraph (a) the clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
(c) When applications are made to waive financial regulation 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 invitations 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 tender 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.
(e) The clerk in the presence of at least one member of the council shall open all sealed tenders at the same time on the prescribed date.
(f) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £5,000 or if all the tenders are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
(g) When it is to enter into a contract less than £5,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of 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 £1000 and above £500 the clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 7.2 above shall apply.
(h) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

9. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works.

9.1 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 contact).

9.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the clerk 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 variation, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.

9.3 Any variation to a contract, or addition to a contract, or omission from a contract, must be put in writing to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council and approved by them and the contractor. The contractor must inform Whitegate & Marton Parish Council in writing where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision. The contractor must have any additional cost approved by Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

10. Stores and equipment.

10.1 The officer in charge of the stores and equipment will be responsible for the care and custody of it.

10.2 When goods are delivered they must be checked that they match the order, the correct amount is received and in good condition. The clerk must keep all delivery notes.

10.3 All stocks are to be kept to a minimum and will are to be checked by the clerk and officer in charge at least once a year.

11. Properties and estates.

Whitegate & Marton Parish Council owns the area known as 'The Beeches'

12. Assets.

12.1 The clerk and chairman shall maintain a record of all assets owned by the Whitegate & Marton PC. The RFO shall be responsible for an annual check of the assets.

12.2 The Practitioners' Guide (the Guide) states that smaller authorities 'need to apply a reasonable approach to asset valuation which is consistent from year to year'. Under this range of possible approaches, all assets are expected to carry some value, however small. In particular, the Guide states that where assets are gifted at zero cost to the authority, they should be recorded at a nominal value of £1.

13. Insurance.

13.1 The clerk shall keep a record of all insurances affected by Whitegate & Marton Parish Council. Such insurances shall be reviewed annually.

13.2 All employees of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall be included in suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

14. Risk management.

14.1 The clerk and chairman shall prepare and promote the risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

14.2 When considering any new activity the clerk shall prepare a draft risk management policy for the activity and shall bring a draft addressing the legal and financial liabilities and risk managements issues that arise to Whitegate & Marton Parish Council for consideration and if thought appropriate, adopt them.

15. General reserves.

15.1 The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances. The parish council aims to maintain between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.

16. Earmarked and other reserves.

16.1 There is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to EMR/CRRs save only that they must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and projects, and their level should be subject to regular review and justification (at least annually and at budget setting), and should be separately identified and enumerated. Significant levels of EMRs in particular may give rise to enquiries from internal and/or external auditors.

17. Revision of financial regulations.

a. The Whitegate & Marton parish Council shall review its financial regulations from time to time and formally approve any changes thereto.

K Rayner

J Ellis

May 2026