**Wistow Parish Council**

**Online Banking and Payments Policy**

Version: 1.00

Adoption Date: 9-01-2024 Review Date:

**Relevant Legislation:**

**The Legislative Reform Order 2014.**

This order removes the requirement for every cheque or other order for the payment of money having to be signed by two members of the council, removing a burden on the council and facilitates the use of electronic means of payment.

**Account Details**

The Council has one current account with HSBC, with cheque book, paying in book and access to online facilities.

**Internal controls:**

The Parish Council must ensure it maintains robust controls on payments as part of its overall financial control system and proposes an Internet Banking Policy as part of its Financial Regulations.

The Clerk has the authority to make payments on behalf of the Council to the amount of £500.

Payments exceeding this amount need be brought to full council to be authorised.

The Clerk shall provide the Council with a Monthly Bank Reconciliation and the corresponding Bank Statement and List of Payments.

**Policy:**

1. Wherever possible, payments will be made using online banking.

2. Payment for items made by internet banking transfer must have evidence

retained.

3. Where internet banking arrangements are made with the bank, the Clerk

shall be appointed as the Primary User. The Clerk will be the only authorised person enabled to make a payment.

4. The Clerk shall set up Secondary User accounts for two members of the Council, the Chair and a Councillor on the Financial Working Group. Secondary Users shall only have access to view payments.

5. Access to internet banking accounts will be directly to the banks log-in page

and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved

password facilities must not be used on any computer used for council

banking work. Breach of this requirement will be treated as a very serious

matter.

6. 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. Signatories may request reimbursement for the installation and annual

update of such software on their personal computers.

7. 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.

8. New beneficiary details and changes to beneficiary details used for internet

banking must be supported by hard copy or email notification for checking.

Hard copies must be kept of changes to beneficiaries account details, these being signed by the Clerk and a

Signatory.

9. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

**Procedure:**

The actual process of operating the online account will be the subject to the rules

and security authorisation process of the HSBC:

1. All orders for payment will be verified for accuracy by the Parish Clerk.

2. The Parish Clerk will initiate payment of smaller invoices(under £500),

3. Orders above this figure shall be prepared by the Clerk and presented to each meeting of the Council together with any supporting

invoices or other documentation for approval.

If there are multiple invoices to pay exceeding this figure in the month the Clerk shall provide a schedule of payments to the council.

4. The online payments has a maximum figure that can be transferred in one day, this amount is set at £1000.

5. If there is an outstanding invoice about this maximum payment threshold the Clerk shall present a cheque to be signed by two councillors at the meeting. (From the list of Signatories held by HSBC)

**Cheque Payments:**

While it is the default position of the Council to utilise online payments where possible, occasions may arise where cheque payments are still necessary, in these instances, the cheques shall be written by the Clerk, and brought to council to be countersigned by two Councillors, there shall be at least four Councillors able to countersign cheques.

**List of Signatories:**

Cllr A Kendal

Cllr R Harrison

Cllr M Hewan

**Where a councillor is to be reimbursed for expenditure, they should not be an**

**authoriser (in the case of internet payments), or a signatory (in the case of**

**cheque payments).**