



# **Responsible Financial Officer Job Description**

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) has overall responsibility for the financial management of Staplehurst Parish Council (SPC). A constructive partnership between the RFO, the clerk, the Council Chairman and the elected members is essential for the proper and efficient reporting and meeting SPC's statutory obligations.

## **1. Personal Specification**

### **(a) Education and experience;**

- (i) Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration or a willingness to achieve this their first year of employment;
- (ii) Relevant financial experience/qualifications;
- (iii) Evidence of continuing professional development;
- (iv) Experience of working within a local government organisation/town/parish council, liaising with councillors and dealing with residents in a similar setting to deliver SPC objectives;
- (v) Evidence of successful delivery of work objectives, preferably in an RFO role similar local government or public organisation.

### **(b) Knowledge, Skills and Ability**

- (i) Knowledge of and commitment to diversity and equal opportunities in line with SPC policies and procedures.
- (ii) Substantial up to date knowledge of RFO functions and associated statutory responsibilities, development will be given as necessary.
- (iii) Knowledge and understanding of local government and the context in which it operates.
- (iv) Clear understanding of local service planning and of budget/resource management;

- (v) Effective written and oral communication and presentation skills that have an impact with key stakeholders including report writing and the creating of presentations.
- (vi) Ability to build and maintain effective and influential working relationships with councillors, the clerk, other members of staff, contractors, residents and other relevant organisations/stakeholders, working with them to meet SPC objectives;
- (vii) Ability to co-ordinate and monitor SPC projects.
- (viii) Excellent organisational skills, ability to prioritise and delegate.
- (ix) Ability to operate in a multi-tasking environment with competent analytical skills (including statistical/data interpretation) that contribute to the identification of issues, problem solving and prioritisation.
- (x) Able to problem solve in both operational and policy implementation through a pragmatic and commercially sound approach.
- (xi) Excellent 'resident as customer' focus skills, in particular demonstrating a collaborative 'can do' attitude.
- (xii) Balance the needs of the resident with the legislative responsibilities of HPC.
- (xii) Act on behalf of the Clerk or HPC when required to do so.

## **2. Role Overview**

The role of the RFO is to ensure SPC's finances are managed legally, transparently, and efficiently. This includes the administration of financial affairs as outlined in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 and the Local Government Act 1972 s151. The RFO is responsible for the day-to-day management of SPC's financial management, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and proper practices.

## **3. Specific Duties**

- (i) Maintain the accounting system and provide monthly reports for presentation to SPC which needs to include the explanation of any major variances.
- (ii) Prepare and submit year-end financial statements for SPC, in line with specific legislation. Submit to the relevant Committee/SPC meeting for approval and submit to Charities Commission/external auditor.
- (iii) Prepare the annual budget, present to the Employment, Finance and Strategy Working Group (EFS Working Group) adhering to the budget timetable.
- (iv) To manage SPC's system of internal control in consultation with the Clerk, ensuring quarterly review by the EFS Working Group.

(v) Maintain SPC's asset register in a suitable manner to meet the internal auditors' requirements.

(vi) Attend meetings: Monthly EFS Working Group meetings to provide financial advice, usually Thursday morning. Attend a quarterly Council meeting, these meetings normally take place in the evening.

(vii) Review any VAT implications in relation to SPC, prepare and submit quarterly VAT returns to HMRC and make appropriate payments. Ensure SPC meets statutory VAT obligations and VAT is not claimed unlawfully.

(viii) Assist the Clerk in the preparation of other strategic reviews and to make recommendations.

(ix) Work with the Clerk to devise and implement a system of risk management covering all aspects of SPC

#### **4. Breakdown of Tasks within Specific Responsibilities**

<b>Maintain the accounting system and provide monthly reports for presentation to HPC which needs to include the explanation of any major variances.</b>	
<b>Preparation and Actions</b>	<b>During meetings</b>
Update SPC's computerised accounting system in order to generate transparent reports	Provide financial advice and answer questions relating to SPC's financial position where possible
Balance the computerised accounting system and generate a bank reconciliation report present to SPC along with bank statements to ensure it is clear legislation has been complied with	Provide the bank reconciliation report and bank statements to be initialled by the Chairman in front of the council
Provide explanations on under and over spend when required to do so	Provide explanations on under and over spend when required to do so
To run the monthly payments list and send to the Clerk for circulation with the expenditure against budget report, and bank reconciliation.	Answer questions on payments made under the Clerks delegated authority.

<b>Maintain the accounting system and provide quarterly reports to the EFS Working Group</b>	
<b>Preparation and Actions</b>	<b>During Meetings</b>
Balance the computerised accounting system and generate a bank reconciliation report present to the EFS Working Group along with bank statements to ensure it is clear legislation has been complied with.	Provide the bank reconciliation report and bank statements to be initialled by the EFS Working Group Chairman in front of the council.

Provide explanations on how grant funding has been spent and submit to the EFS Working Group	Assist the EFS Working Group in providing financial oversight
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<b>Prepare and submit year end financial statements for SPC, in line with specific legislation. Submit to the relevant Committee/SPC meeting for approval and submit to Charities Commission/external auditor.</b>	
<b>Pre Audit</b>	<b>During After Audit</b>
Prepare end of year accounts for SPC, all reports and the computerised accounting system up to date prior to the internal audit	Provide the Clerk with the assistance required to conduct the internal audit.
Prepare the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to be signed off by the internal auditor prior to submission.	Once signed off present to SPC for them to complete s1 of the AGAR. The Chairman and Clerk signs s1 and the Chairman and the RFO signs section two.
	Send the AGAR to the external auditor by 30 June every year.
Answer the external auditors' questions	Display the audit completion notice by 1 September every year.

<b>Prepare the annual budget, present to the EFS Working Group adhering to the budget timetable</b>	
<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During Meetings</b>
Prepare a draft budget adding items where necessary. Calculate the proposed precept rise.	Assist the Clerk in providing sound budgetary advice which will lead to a balanced budget.
Meet with the EFS Working Group chairman and SPC chairman to discuss the budget. Agree the date to present to SPC.	Provide support to the Chairman
Action changes to the budget prior to and after the meeting	Minute the meeting, including noting any changes.
Prepare the budget recommended by the EFS Working Group and send to the Clerk for presentation to full council.	Provide support to the Clerk and SPC Chairman throughout the budget item at full council.
Complete and submit the precept application ensuring the relevant breakdown is completed and Clerk signs it.	
Monitor SPC account to ensure the precept payments are received from Maidstone Borough Council.	

Monitor the budget throughout the year	Provide guidance to council and committees when dealing with the budget.
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**To manage SPC's system of internal control in consultation with the Clerk, ensuring quarterly review by the EFS Working Group.**

<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During Meetings</b>
To ensure all staff comply with the system of internal control.	Ensure SPC and its committees comply with the system of internal control
Prepare the Internal Control Procedure to ensure it is updated and presented to the EFS Working Group quarterly	Provide the checklist to the EFS Working Group Chairman in order for them to sign on behalf of the committee
Update the Internal Control Procedure after the internal audit and use this to guide workflow throughout the year.	Draw the EFS Working Group/SPC to the items needing attention in the audit/internal control procedure
Review the Financial Regulations annually, ensuring that they meet the current legal requirements	Report to EFS Working Group and then onto the Councils AGM for adoption.

**Maintain SPC's asset register in a suitable manner to meet the internal auditors' requirements**

<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During Meetings</b>
Work with the Clerk to maintain SPC's asset register held on the computerised accounts system.	Present the asset register to the EFS Working Group at least annually, more often if required
Conduct RCA's and valuations as directed by SPC/EFS Working Group.	
Check the asset register monthly and update if required.	Update the EFS Working Group of any large or significant change to the SPC asset register
Work with the EFS Working Group and assets and procurement champion in order to meet SPC's statutory obligation	

**Attend monthly SPC meetings to provide financial advice, attend and minute the quarterly EFS Working Group meeting**

<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During meetings</b>
Prepare the agenda and supporting papers for the quarterly EFS Working Group meeting. Circulate to councillors in line with their statutory obligations.	Provide explanations to councillors and update the committee on questions asked prior to the meeting
Produce the minutes and send to the Chairman is ordered to corroborate and	Make clear and concise record of the decisions made in line with SPC's statutory duty

ensure a clear and concise set of minutes is completed	
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<b>Review any VAT implications in relation to SPC, prepare and submit quarterly VAT returns to HMRC and make appropriate payments. Ensure SPC meets statutory VAT obligations and VAT is not claimed unlawfully</b>	
<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During meetings</b>
Circulate the quarterly VAT return for SPC to the EFS Working Group.	Provide accurate advice to ensure SPC remains lawful
If SPC/EFS Working Group agree to a virement then process this on the computerised accounts system	If more money is needed for a budget heading give the relevant advice to the committee and/or council to withdraw funds
Process the refund to be deposited in the SPC reserve account.	

<b>Work with the Clerk to devise and implement a system of risk management covering all aspects of SPC,</b>	
<b>Before and After Meetings</b>	<b>During meetings</b>
Work with the Clerk and internal operations champion to implement financial risk management systems	Present to council and answer relevant questions
Risk assessments should be done quarterly on all SPC assets.	
Note when the statutory checks need to be carried out such as fire, legionella etc and delegate to the Parish Support Officer to book.	
Meet the contractor carrying out the statutory checks.	
Give the Parish Support Officer a full brief of the work required and ask them to obtain the relevant quotes for you to write a report	Present work between £0 and £1,000 within Delegated Authority of RFO / Clerk.
Action the decision made by the EFS Working Group/SPC	Present work over £1,000.00 to the SPC drafting a report with your recommendation.

## 5. Review

The EFS Working Group will review the workload and amend job descriptions from time to time as demands change.