

Steyning Parish Council

Use of online banking and Parish Council Debit Card – Risk Assessment

Benefits: quick and safe payment of invoices and staff salaries, access to cheaper, online products and services, preparation for the future when cheque payments may not be possible.

Risks:	Actions to minimise risk (as stated in NALC revised Financial Regs):
Premature payment of invoices.	All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council, or authorized by the Chairman of a Committee.
Over payment of salaries.	For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council [,or a duly authorised committee,] may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation budgetary controls are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance & Community Committee.
Unauthorized payment.	Instructions for each payment to be signed by two authorised bank signatories, copies to be retained and payments to be reported to council. Evidence to be retained. Internal Control is undertaken, by the Chairman of the Finance Committee, during the financial year, to ensure that bank accounts reconcile with entries on the financial software.
Failure to make payment.	Following authorization, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
Mis-use of pin or password.	No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, to any person not

	authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
Loss of pin or password.	A note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable.
Risk of internet fraud.	<p>The council will ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.</p> <p>Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work.</p>
Mis-use of debit card.	<p>Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and Deputy and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of [£500] unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.</p> <p>The Parish Council shall reserve the right to debit from the salary of the individual responsible, any amount spent illegally or without authorization.</p>
Embezzlement.	The Parish Council has Fidelity insurance.