**Debit/Credit Card Policy**

The Debit/Credit Card Policy was adopted by Full Council at its Meeting held on 5 April 2022.

**Introduction**

In view of the increase of internet purchasing due to the potential savings that online purchasing may offer and the requirements of maintaining operations, Hazlemere Parish Council may authorise the issue of debit cards to employees and Councillors for business use only.

Hazlemere Parish Council does not currently accept payments by debit card payments. Payments made by The Clerk to be authorised by email from the Clerk to Chairman/Vice Chairman. Debit Card Payments to be reported to Full Council via unpaid expenses sheet.

In the absence of a credit/debit card Staff members and Councillors have found themselves using their own debit cards to make online purchases and obtaining a refund from the Parish Council funds, sometimes weeks after a payment has left their own account. This is not good practice and Staff/Councillors should not be forced to involve their own finances in serving the Council’s needs.

**Policy Statement**

All businesses that handle card payment data are required to comply with industry rules aimed at increasing data security. These are set out in the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (“PCI DSS”), which were developed by the five card brands: VISA, MasterCard, AMEX, JCB and Discover. The purpose of PCI DSS is to ensure that businesses are reducing the risk of card payment data theft and fraud and therefore providing a secure environment for their customers to make payment. The standard applies to all organisations that hold, process, or exchange cardholder information. Enforcement of compliance is via the organisation’s card provider. Organisations that fail to meet the compliance requirements risk losing their ability to process card payments and being audited and/or fined.

The Council’s preferred method for taking individual payments for goods and services is on-line via Bank Transfer, however cash and cheques are acceptable.

Adherence to this policy and the associated procedures is mandatory for all Staff/Councillors who handle or process card payment(s) on behalf of the Council. The issue of a Council debit card to an Employee or Councillor must be authorised by the Finance and Governance Committee and be issued to a named Employee or Councillor for their use only, no other individual(s) may use the debit card.

The financial limit of each issued debit card shall not exceed £1,000, except in exceptional circumstances. Any additional amount must be approved by the Finance and Governance Committee. Upon being issued a debit card the Employee/Councillor shall be advised of their individual financial limit by Finance and Governance Committee. In the case of a pre-paid debit card this limit will be £100.

The Head Warden has access to:

* An Esso fuel card and is for use of fuel for the Parish Council only, which is kept in the truck; and
* A Screwfix/B&Q payment card for urgent tools for Parish Council use only, which is kept by the Clerk’s Assistant with the confidential account papers.

**Card Payment Data**

Cardholder Data Sensitive Authentication Data (SAD) Primary Account Number (PAN) i.e. the 16 Full Magnetic Stripe Data/Chip Data digit number on the front of the card. Cardholder Name CAV2/CVC2/CVV2/CID i.e. the last 3 digits on the signature strip on the back of the card Expiration Date Pin Numbers Service Code PCI DSS requirements are applicable if a primary account number (PAN) is stored, processed, or transmitted. If the PAN is not stored, processed, or transmitted, PCI DSS requirements do not apply.

The Card will be in the name of the Parish Council.

**Procurement Credit Card**

The Parish Council’s procurement credit card is available primarily to take advantage of approved on-line purchases offering better pricing than traditional suppliers.

The following procedures apply for the use of the procurement credit card:

* All procurement card purchases must be for the Parish Council and no personal purchases can be made.
* The Parish Council’s card will be charged to the Parish Council’s main bank account.
* Only the Clerk/Chairman of Council can authorise placement of orders using the credit card. If the Clerk is placing the order, use of the credit card must be authorised by the Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council. Each purchase is to be backed up by a receipt or internet confirmation of payment.
* Only secure websites must be used to make purchases.
* If any purchases contain any charges for VAT; a proper VAT receipt or invoice should be obtained.
* Each purchase must follow the normal purchasing procedure
* Sales vouchers, invoices and requisition forms are checked by the Clerk’s Assistant against the amounts entered and reconciled with the bank statements and credit card statements.
* The balance on the card is automatically paid in full each month.

**Security of the Procurement Card**

* All transactions to be recorded and authorised and entered onto the accounting software
* The safety of the card and PIN will be the responsibility of the named person.
* The PIN notification should be destroyed immediately following receipt and after memorisation.
* The card number will not be disclosed to any third party except for the purpose of a card transaction or to report the loss or theft of the card.
* The Parish Council will provide the bank with all the information in its possession as to the circumstances of the theft, misuse, loss of the card or disclosure of the PIN number and take all steps deemed necessary by the bank to assist in the recovery of the missing card.
* A card that is reported as lost, stolen or liable to misuse will not be subsequently used but will be destroyed by cutting it up into pieces and written confirmation of its destruction will be forwarded to the bank immediately.
* Cardholders will surrender their procurement card when the cardholder leaves the employment of the Parish Council. The card will not be subsequently used but will be destroyed by cutting it up into pieces.

March 2022

To be reviewed April 2024