



Moulsecobomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project FINANCE POLICY and PROCEDURES

This policy sets out the approach of Moulsecobomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project (MFGWP) to financial management, to help safeguard the assets of the organisation and to minimise the risk of fraud or other irregularity

Introduction

Accountability for the financial management of Moulsecobomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project (MFGWP) lies with the board of trustees, although day to day management responsibilities are delegated to the Project Manager.

A system of financial controls is in place to reduce the risk of losses through theft and fraud, bad decisions, human error and management not adhering to the policies. If these do occur, financial controls help the trustees find out sooner and take necessary action.

Our policies

1. Segregation of duties

No single individual has sole responsibility for any single transaction over £250 from authorisation to completion and review. All transactions over £250 must have another person involved as a check and balance. Oversight of the bank account would identify unusual transactions under £250.

2. Bank accounts

- a. Only Bank accounts in MFGWP's name should be used to receive money or make payments on MFGWP's behalf.
- b. Bank accounts in MFGWP's name must only be used for MFGWP's business; they must not be used for the benefit of individuals or third parties.
- c. Opening or closing of bank accounts, and the approval or removal of signatories are determined by the board of trustees and recorded in the board minutes.

3. Expenses

- a. Staff, trustees and volunteers can be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the organisation.
- b. Charity law forbids trustees from receiving payment for the time that they give. However, it is acceptable and appropriate that they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses relating to their work with MFGWP.

4. Reserves

- a. Reserves are held for use in the charitable aims of the organisation. MFGWP aims to hold enough funds in reserve to cover unforeseen emergencies and to mitigate the risk of unplanned closure on beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- b. The trustees wish to maintain a level of reserves that would ensure the stability of the charity in the medium term, whilst maximising the use of the charity's resources towards its charitable objectives.
- c. Therefore, they will seek to maintain adequate unrestricted funds which are not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets. The charity is committed to building a level of reserves which represent 3 months running costs.



Moulsecomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project FINANCE POLICY and PROCEDURES

Our procedures

1. Budgetary Controls

- a) Budgets are prepared annually by the Treasurer and agreed by the board of trustees.
- b) Management accounts are prepared monthly by the Treasurer to monitor variance against budgets.
- c) Variations are reported to the board of trustees for resolution.
- d) Financial Information is reviewed at quarterly board meetings.
- e) The bank account is reconciled monthly.
- f) Annual accounts and an annual report are produced after the accounting period.

2. Bank payments

- a) The Company Secretary is responsible for making bank payments.
- b) Two authorisations are required for any payments over £250. The second authorisation is made by the Chair of Trustees.
- c) One other named trustee (recorded in Trustee meeting minutes) is permitted to countersign in the event of either the Company Secretary or Chair being away.
- d) The Company Secretary checks invoices before payments are made, and reviews any unusual transactions with the project manager.
- e) The Project Manager holds a prepaid Revolut card, which is loaded by agreement with the Company Secretary. The Revolut Account is overseen by the Treasurer.

3. Expenses

- a) Expenses can be claimed by staff and volunteers as agreed by the Project Manager.
- b) Any amounts claimed must be for actual costs incurred wholly and exclusively in carrying out the duties of their employment.
- c) Expense claims should be supported by valid receipts and submitted to the Company Secretary.
- d) Reimbursement is made by BACS.

4. Income

MFGWP trustees and staff must exercise due diligence prior to accepting significant donations to ensure that any funds accepted are not in conflict with our values and do not present a risk to our reputation or independence.

5. Cash Handling

- a) Any cash received, for example at an open day, is counted and recorded.
- b) Cash is paid in to the bank as soon as it is practical to do so.

6. Accounting Records

- c) MFGWP maintains a computerised accounting system - Xero. Entries are made with sufficient detail to trace back to source documentation.



Moulsecomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project FINANCE POLICY and PROCEDURES

d) Financial records and source documents are kept for a minimum of six years

Responsibility

The board of trustees are responsible for:

1. Safeguarding the assets of MFGWP and ensuring proper application of resources
2. Taking steps to prevent fraud and other irregularities.
3. Keeping sufficient financial records to show the charity's financial position.
4. Approving properly budgeted annual plans and monitoring performance against these plans
5. Preparing an annual report and statutory accounts meeting legal requirements
6. Appointing an independent examiner
7. The board recognises that the Project Manager has day-to-day responsibility for management of the organisation but that accountability lies with them
8. All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to follow this policy.

Review period

We will review this policy on an annual basis to make sure it continues to meet the needs of the project and its users.

Signed by Project Manager and Trustees

Julie Shergold
Treasurer

Duncan Graham Cameron
Company Secretary

Susie Howells
Chair

Warren Carter
Project Manager

Date 5 November 2024