

## **FAQ – Governance, Finance, Data Protection & Licensing**

Q: Can Fife Council provide generic email addresses for Community Councils?

A: For data security reasons we are unable to provide generic email addresses. Fife Voluntary Action have confirmed that they can assist community groups requiring assistance on setting up generic email accounts., Digital Fife may be able to assist.

Useful links:

- Fife Voluntary Action - [Fife Voluntary Action](#)
- FVA Michael Nicholson, Business Analyst - [michael@fva.org](mailto:michael@fva.org)
- Digital Fife - [Digital Fife v2](#)

Q: What responsibilities do Community Councils have in respect of Data Protection? Should all Community Councils be paying for Data Protection and claiming the fee back via annual grant?

A: As Community Councils handle personal data, they are required to adhere to all relevant legislation and register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). There is an annual fee of £40 (£35 paid by direct debit), which will be reimbursed on applying for the annual grant. Please provide the ICO registration number on the annual grant application form. For further information, please refer to Appendices 3 and 4 of the Guidance for Community Councils - [Resources, guidance and training | Fife Council](#)

Q: Do we need to appoint a Data Protection Officer?

A: Community Councils are not required to appoint a Data Protection Officer, but best practice would be to have someone nominated within the community council to take responsibility for this area. This would include registration with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), records management and ensuring the community council displays a privacy statement.

Useful links:

- [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)
- Guidance for Community Councils - [Resources, guidance and training | Fife Council](#) (See also Appendix 3 and 4)

Q: Is there guidance on retention periods?

A: Guidance on retention periods can be found in the guidance section on the website [Resources, guidance and training | Fife Council](#) (see Appendix 5 – Retention Guidelines for Community Councils). Community councils are required to document attendees from their list of membership in minutes but attendees names do not have to be written in full.

Q: The calculation of Annual Grant has not changed over the years. Is there any consideration being given to uplifting the rate/ payment in line with inflation?

A: Community Council grants are currently fixed at a base rate of £400, with an allowance of 12p per head of population. Population figures will take a few years to catch up with increased population, due to the stats always being in arrears. Where there is an increase, quite often there will not be a significant difference as, if there was an increase of 100 residents, added to Annual Grant, this would work out as  $100 \times 12p \text{ per head} = £12.00$ . Data Protection Fee can be reimbursed in addition to this sum.

Q: How do you meet the criteria for 2 signatories if you use a Debit Card?

A: Where a Community Council uses online banking, it may not always be possible for two or three people to authorise payments. Permission should be noted alongside the record of the payment itself or in the minutes of the meeting where it was discussed and agreed. Good practice would be to initiate an email from one signatory to allow a trail for transparency and recording, authorising payment being made by at least one other signatory.

Q: Q: At what point does the treasurer need to consider VAT? Is there any savings that can be claimed back from Community Council expenses?

A: The limit is £85,000 turnover before registration for VAT. It is unlikely that any Community Council would reach this limit and be VAT registered, therefore Community Councils are not eligible for VAT relief. This means that VAT can't be reclaimed on expenditure incurred by the Community Council. For example for a

purchase of an item at £1,000, the cost to the Community Council will be £1,200 (inclusive of VAT).

Q: Our Community Council sells advertisement space in a quarterly newsletter. Should these advertisements be reported to HMRC?

A: No, unless the turnover of the Community Council exceeds £85,000 limit.