

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The trustees of Gazen Salts Nature Reserve (GSNR) share overall responsibility for financial control and safeguarding the funds of GSNR and ensuring that the organisation operates in accordance with the financial powers stated in its Constitution. This document sets out how this responsibility will be exercised and where functions have been delegated to particular trustees of GSNR.

2. The role of the Treasurer

- 2.1 The Treasurer takes the lead role in:
- coordinating the setting of an annual operating budget for GSNR
 - ensuring GSNR has proper accounts.
 - reviewing financial performance
 - maintain the Companies House and Charity Commission entries.
 - ensuring policies for finance are regularly reviewed.
 - ensuring that GSNR has robust and effective financial controls in place.
 - liaising with the Chair and Trustees about financial matters and with the independent examiner.
 - reporting on financial matters at the AGM
- 2.2 The Treasurer will carry out periodic internal checks, for example prior to audit, and a checklist to assist with this will be provided as required.

3. Role of Deputy Treasurer

- 3.1 The Deputy Treasurer will ensure continuity of all financial matters where the Treasurer is unable to undertake their duties.

4. Financial records

- 4.1 Financial records will be kept so that:
- GSNR can meet its legal and other obligations, e.g., HM Revenue and Customs, Charities Acts, Companies Acts, Common Law.
 - The GSNR trustees can have control of the organisation's finances.
 - The organisation can meet contractual obligations and the requirements of funding bodies.
- 4.2 The Treasurer will keep proper books of account on behalf of the trustees using an Excel spreadsheet. These will include:
- A cash book analysing all transactions.
 - Sales, purchase and nominal ledgers
 - Petty cash records
 - Fixed asset List.

5. Budget

- 5.1 The financial year for GSNR will end on 31st March.
- 5.2 Before the start of each financial year, the GSNR trustees will approve a budgeted income and expenditure account for the following year.

6. Reporting and Monitoring

- 6.1 The Treasurers will report to each meeting of the board of trustees, at a minimum of once every 3 months, detailing:
 - The current financial position of GSNR.
 - Actual income and expenditure against the operating budget
 - Income and expenditure transactions for the previous period.
 - Current expenditure and income of any grants received.

7. Accounts and Audit

- 7.1 Accounts will be drawn up after each financial year within 4 months of the end of the year and presented to the next Annual General Meeting.
- 7.2 The accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission and to Companies House.
- 7.3 The trustees will appoint an appropriately independent examiner to audit and compile the accounts for presentation to the next AGM.
- 7.4 The trustees will review the appointment of the independent examiner at least every 3 years.

8. Bank

- 8.1 GSNR will bank with Lloyds Bank where the accounts will be held in the name of "Gazen Salts Nature Reserve". The current account will be held with Lloyds Bank. All bank accounts held by GSNR must be agreed and approved by the GSNR trustees.
- 8.2 The bank mandate (list of people who can sign cheques and authorise on-line transactions on the organisation's behalf) will always be approved and minuted by the GSNR trustees as will all changes to it.
- 8.3 GSNR will require the bank to provide current account statements every month. These will be reconciled with the cash book every month by the Treasurer and reported to the trustees.
- 8.4 GSNR will not use any other bank or financial institution or use overdraft facilities or invest speculatively unless authorised, approved and minuted by the GSNR trustees.
- 8.5 On-line banking access will be available to the Chair, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer and one other nominated trustee as agreed by the committee.

9. Best value

- 9.1 When procuring goods and services it is GSNR's aim to achieve best value. For goods and services valued at over £2,500 at least three quotes will be obtained.
- 9.2 For service contracts, organisations will be invited to submit a proposal, and these will be considered in relation to specific criteria including price, service requirements and quality. Whenever possible feedback will be obtained from organisations that are currently using the relevant service provider.
- 9.3 Service contracts will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

10. Fundraising, funding bids, tenders, and partnership arrangements

- 10.1 All fund raising, grant applications and tendering undertaken on behalf of GSNR will be done in the name of the organisation and will generally be based on recovery of the full cost of the proposed work. If the organisation is to subsidise the cost of any work from reserves or earned income, then this must be approved in advance by the board of trustees.
- 10.2 All bids and tenders require the prior approval of the board of trustees or an approved sub-committee.
- 10.3 Bids or tenders above £2000 require the approval of the board of trustees.
- 10.4 Details of all funding bids and tenders will be provided to the trustee board.
- 10.5 GSNR may be the partner in a bid submitted by another organisation only if this is consistent with the objectives of GSNR as set out in our Constitution. The partnership arrangements must have the prior approval of the board of trustees.
- 10.6 When GSNR receive funding from partnership arrangements and take on financial commitments a written agreement must be in place covering the financial arrangements. In these circumstances the funding that GSNR receives should generally be based on recovery of the full cost of the proposed work. If the organisation is to subsidise the cost of work from reserves or earned income, then this must be approved in advance by the board of trustees.
- 10.7 When GSNR submits a funding bid or tender as the accountable body and there are partners to the bid or tender the arrangements must be agreed in advance by the trustees. This includes the composition of the partnership. Where funds are to be dispersed or remitted to partners the partners must have in place arrangements for accounting for these funds that have been agreed with GSNR and that are consistent with our audit and reporting requirements. An agreement must be in place before funds are allocated to partners.

11. Receipts (income)

- 11.1 GSNR will ensure that all the income to which it is entitled is received and that this is evidenced.
- 11.2 A schedule of grant income with the method of payment will be maintained.
- 11.3 All monies received will be recorded promptly in the cash analysis book and banked without delay.
- 11.4 The organisation will maintain files of documentation i.e., letters from funding bodies to back this up.
- 11.5 GSNR will maintain records of all expenditures against Restricted Grants and provide any necessary reports to the relevant Grant giving body.
- 11.6 All payments must be made to GSNR by cheque or BACS.
- 11.7 The Treasurer will review all debts monthly and agree any follow up action. When an individual debt exceeds £500 for a period of more than 3 months then this will be brought to the attention of trustees and relevant action agreed.
- 11.8 A schedule of charges for services and facilities will be maintained by the Treasurer. This schedule will be reviewed at least annually, and increases agreed and reported to the trustees.

12. Receipts (Donations)

- 12.1 Donations can be received by BACS, Cheque, Cash, or items in kind.
- 12.2 All Donations will be recorded in the cash analysis book. For Items in kind an estimate of the value will be recorded.

13. Payments (Expenditure)

- 13.1 The preferred method of payment is by bank transfer. Cheques will also be used when bank transfer payment is not possible. Cheque books (unused and partly used cheque books) will be held by the Treasurer in a safe place under lock and key.
- 13.2 Blank cheques will NEVER be signed.
- 13.3 The relevant payee's name will always be inscribed on cheques before signature. The cheque stub will always be filled in.
- 13.4 No payments will be authorised or cheques signed without original documentation.
- 13.5 Money will only be spent to meet conditions and requirements of the funding bodies and in pursuance of the objectives in the Constitution.

14. Payment Procedures and Documentation

- 14.1 Every payment from the organisation's bank accounts and Petty Cash will be supported by an original invoice. The original invoice will be filed and kept for seven years. The person who signs the cheque or authorises the online bank payment should ensure that the relevant supporting documentation is available.
- 14.2 The only exceptions to payments not being supported by an original invoice would be for
 - small items below £20 from Petty Cash provided expenses claim form has been completed and signed in lieu of a receipt.
 - Where a donation of equipment, materials or other items in kind has been made, which will be recorded as both an expenditure and donation for the same amount in the Petty Cash Book.
- 14.3 All expenditure is reported to the trustees as described in section 6.
- 14.4 Contracts and Credit Accounts with suppliers can only be set up if authorised by the Treasurer.
- 14.5 A petty cash float will be maintained at a sum agreed by the trustees.
 - The current agreed petty cash float is £100.
 - The Treasurer will have overall responsibility for this float.
 - Any cash donations will be added to the petty cash float and recorded in the Petty Cash records. If the petty cash float exceeds the agreed sum, then the excess will be banked.
 - A cheque will be drawn for enough when the float falls below the agreed sum.
- 14.6 Expenses/Allowances - GSNR will reimburse expenditure paid for personally by trustees and volunteers that is claimed using the claim form attached, providing:
 - The expenditure has been authorised by the Chair or Treasurer.
 - Fares are evidenced by proof of purchase.
 - Other expenditure is evidenced by original receipts.
 - Car mileage is based on HMRC allowances.
 - The claim is submitted within 3 months of expenditure being incurred.

15. Process for authorisation of payments:

- 15.1 All payments by cheque or BACS will be authorised by two signatories. The first signatory should normally be the Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer followed any of the other authorised signatories.
- 15.2 No signatory should authorise payments to him or herself. It is the responsibility of the other signatories to ensure this does not happen.
- 15.3 For on-line payments the Treasurer forwards summary evidence to a second signatory where appropriate.

16. Fixed assets and inventory of capital items

- 16.1 GSNR will set up and maintain a fixed assets register stating the date of purchase, cost, serial numbers and normal location of the asset(s). If it holds stocks of goods, of significant value, it will maintain proper records. GSNR will maintain an inventory of all capital items.

17. Insurance

- 17.1 GSNR shall continuously maintain adequate and legal insurance cover. Our policy is currently with Zurich Insurance, and we display all insurance certificates at the Reserve.

18. Reserves Policy

- 18.1 The trustees will consider the level of reserves that is prudent for GSNR to have when agreeing the annual budget. Consideration will be given to future strategy, potential liabilities, and any other significant factors that should be considered were GSNR to close. The specific reserves policy including any designation of reserves for specific purposes will be agreed by trustees on an annual basis.
- 18.2 The Current Reserves is set at two times the annual operating costs of GSNR.

19. Conflict of Interest of Trustees

- 19.1 If a trustee is in any way, directly or indirectly, interested in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the organisation, they must declare the nature and extent of that interest to the other trustees.
- 19.2 If a declaration of interest proves to be or becomes inaccurate or incomplete, a further declaration must be made.
- 19.3 Any required declaration of interest must be made before the charity enters the transaction or arrangement. A declaration is not required in relation to an interest of which the trustee is not aware or where the trustee is not aware of the transaction or arrangement in question. For this purpose, a trustee is treated as being aware of matters of which they ought reasonably to be aware.
- 19.4 If a trustee states a conflict of interest, they will normally be requested to leave the meeting while the relevant agenda item is discussed.
- 19.5 A record of any professional or personal interest that may make it difficult for a trustee to fulfil their duties impartially, or may create an appearance of impropriety, with any item on the agenda for that day's meeting is to be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- 19.6 GSNR may pay and offer other material benefits, to one or more of its trustees to provide services to the charity, where the trustee board reasonably believes it to be in the charity's best interests to do so. The services in question must be ones which the charity trustee provides in addition to carrying out normal trustee duties. Any such proposal would be

treated on a case for case basis and would only be approved subject to compliance with the Articles of Association and Charity Commission guidance.

20. Maintain Companies House and Charity Commission Entries

- 20.1 Maintain list of trustees/directors.
- 20.2 Administrative access will be given to the Chair and Deputy Treasurer.

21. Other Undertakings

- 21.1 GSNR does not accept liability for any financial commitment unless properly authorised. Any orders placed or undertakings given, with financial consequences must be approved by the Treasurer up to a value of £500. Those valued at over £500 require the approval of the board of trustees.
- 21.2 Trustees will always act in the best interest of the organisation and if they experience a conflict of interest, they will not divulge sensitive information about the organisation.
- 21.3 The confidentiality of trustees and volunteers' financial circumstances will always respected.

The trustees of GSNR will keep these financial controls under review.

Approved at the Trustees' committee meeting on 21st November 2024.



Volunteer and Trustee Expense Claim Form

This form can be used to claim expenses within the GSNR's guidelines.

Please enclose copies of receipts, circling relevant spending.

Name			
Date			
Date of expenditure	Description of expenditure	Amount claimed	Receipt Attached
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Total amount claimed			
Volunteer signature			
Treasurer signature			
Date			
Amount paid.			