

Financial controls policy

Our system of Financial Control is relatively simple. We have two bank accounts with Lloyds Bank, both of which are controlled by the Treasurer, Robert Walters, MA, FCA.

One of the accounts is a current account from which payments are authorised by two signatories and the other is a deposit account. Transfers between the two accounts can be done by the Treasurer on his own. No other payments are made from the deposit account. The payments from the current account are set up by the Treasurer on the basis of evidence in the form of invoices received or convincing requests from members of our committees and authorised by one of the other signatories on the basis of an email from the Treasurer saying what the payment is for.

Expenditure consists of grants to the museums, archives etc, payments for administration or payments for trips and other events such as lectures. Requests for funding from the museums etc are discussed and agreed at Executive Committee meetings and paid on subsequent invoices from the City Council. The other payments are made on appropriate invoices (eg: printing of Newsletters) or requests for reimbursements of eg: postage supported by a receipt for the purchases.

Income (eg: for trips, lectures etc) is banked using paying-in books held by various members of the Events Committee while income from subscriptions in the form of cheques is banked with a paying-in book held by the Membership Secretary. Much of our subscription income is paid by standing orders and the Membership Secretary gathers information from the bank statements.

While financial controls on cash normally require two people to count the cash immediately after the event which generates it, we would not wish to impose this burden, often late in the evening, on volunteers who have worked hard to raise the cash. We prefer to sanction, through the Executive Committee, such of our members, usually trustees, whose integrity we have no reason to doubt to collect, count and bank the cash. Cash received is banked within a week and the Chair, Treasurer and Events Organiser are informed of the total banked.

We now have surplus funds which are dealt with in accordance with our published Financial Reserves Policy. The investment of surplus funds is discussed at the Executive Committee and we make investments in short-term funds protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme at the best interest rates obtainable consistent with safety. We have chosen not to take risks on Stock Exchange investments.

The duty of the Treasurer is to scrutinise all requests for expenditure and to ask appropriate questions. He also keeps his own records of transactions on a spreadsheet which produces accounts to date after every transaction. He also produces a monthly report to the Executive Committee showing balances on all bank and investment accounts together with grants to the museum, etc paid and pending.

Our annual accounts are independently reviewed, but not audited, by an external examiner who happens to be a Chartered Accountant.