

Chigwell Parish Council

Prepared by RFO

05/01/2026

Report to Council

Income – Financial Regulations 2025/26, Section 13.3

Write-off of Irrecoverable Income (Cemetery Fees)

Purpose of Report

To seek Council approval, in accordance with Financial Regulation 13.3, for the write-off of irrecoverable income and the accounting treatment of long-outstanding unrepresented cheques relating to cemetery fees.

Financial Regulation Reference

Financial Regulations 2025/26, Section 13.3:

Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts, shall be reported to the Council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The Council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

Background

The following cemetery invoices were issued and recorded as paid by cheque; however, the funds never appeared in the Council's Barclays bank account:

Invoice No.	Grave No.	Date	Amount	Cheque No.
168	1814	02/09/2022	£60.00	CHQ000918
169	1751	02/09/2022	£165.00	CHQ022541
170	876	02/09/2022	£165.00	CHQ022542
33	16	06/05/2022	£80.00	CHQ001028

Total: £470.00

- Cheques relating to invoices 168, 169 and 170 were sent by the Post Office on 02 September 2022.
- The cheque relating to invoice 33 was sent by the Post Office on 06 May 2022.
- The total amount of £470.00 has never appeared on the Council's Barclays bank account.
- The amount was reported as an unrepresented item in the bank reconciliation statements from May 2022 to the present.

Actions Taken

- The Post Office was contacted but was unable to confirm that the cheques had been processed by the bank and directed the Financial Officer (FO) to Barclays.
 - The FO visited the Barclays branch on 29 June 2022 to investigate the missing £80.00 cheque.
 - Progress was significantly delayed as the FO was not registered in the bank's system and Barclays was unable to provide detailed information at that time.
 - On 20 January 2025, the Interim RFO (IRFO) and a registered bank signatory again contacted Barclays.
 - Barclays conducted a full investigation but was unable to locate the funds, and the case was formally closed.
 - Barclays issued an apology and paid £100 compensation to the Council.
 - The remaining £370.00 continues to be recorded as unrepresented cheques.
 - On 25 September 2025, the RFO wrote to the relevant cemetery plot holders requesting confirmation of cheque banking dates and amounts.
 - No further evidence could be obtained, and the matter could not be resolved due to the age of the case.
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Current Position

- The Barclays account to which the cheques should have been credited is now closed.
 - Cemetery customers were unable to provide additional evidence to confirm the payments.
 - The invoices remain technically unpaid and are considered irrecoverable.
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Financial Implications

- Total original amount: **£470.00**
 - Barclays compensation received: **£100.00**
 - Zurich Insurance claim proposed: **£250.00**
 - Remaining balance to be written off: **£120.00**
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Recommendation

In line with Financial Regulation 13.3, the RFO recommends that Council:

1. Approve acceptance of £250.00 under the Zurich Insurance claim; and
 2. Approve the write-off of the remaining £120.00 as bad debt, as the income is deemed irrecoverable; and
 3. Note that Council approval will be recorded in the accounting records and the write-off actioned in the current financial year.
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Resolution Sought

That Council approves the above recommendations and authorises the RFO to make the necessary accounting entries.