

Parish Council Risk Assessment

Created: 12 January 2022
Reviewed : January, 2025

	Function	Area	Risk identified	Potential impact	Chance of occurrence	Current control measures	Satisfactory / Action required?
1	Governance	Meetings	Minutes do not accurately reflect meeting discussions	Significant	Low	Councillors receive a draft copy of the minutes following each meeting and can put forward amendments if they do not feel that the minutes accurately reflect the discussions at the meeting. If Councillors are still concerned that the minutes are not correct at the next meeting, they can vote not to approve the minutes and state what part of the minutes they believe to be incorrect.	Satisfactory
2	Governance	Meetings	There are insufficient councillors to hold a scheduled meeting of the Council	Significant	Low	The Quorum for a meeting is 3 Councillors. As there are currently 5 Councillors it is unlikely that more than 2 Councillors will be unavailable for any particular meeting. If this happens, the reason is likely to be temporary and the meeting would be delayed until 3 or more Councillors are able to attend.	Satisfactory
3	Governance	Council records	Records are at risk of loss due to fire / flooding / theft	Significant	Low	Most important documents are shared between Councillors by email - the loss of one Councillor's records would therefore not be lead to a significant problem. All Councillors' computers are password protected to prevent unauthorised access.	Satisfactory
4	Governance	Councillors	There are insufficient councillors to continue the business of the Council	Critical	Low	In the event that Councillor numbers drop below 5, the remaining Councillors would look to co-opt new Councillors. If new Councillors cannot be found, the Council can continue if there are 3 Councillors. If it looks like Councillor numbers will reduce below 3 and no new Councillors come forward, then the Council will either consider merging with an adjacent rural parish, or disband, and Parish business can be dealt with by way of an annual Parish Meeting.	Satisfactory
5	Governance	Meetings	Agendas are not properly communicated on time	Significant	Low	Councillors are aware that agenda should be prepared at least 7 days before the next meeting, and if not can contact the Chair to ascertain why it has not been sent out.	Satisfactory

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6	Governance	Legal liability	The council is sued	Significant	Low	Councillors are aware that their actions on behalf of the Council can give rise to legal action and take this into consideration in performing their roles. All decisions are taken by the Council therefore discussions will take such risks into account. In the event that Legal Action is taken against the Council this is covered by insurance.	Satisfactory
7	Finance	Income	The annual Precept is not sufficient to cover the council's annual expenses	Significant	Low	Councillors are updated on all expenses quarterly and review a new year forecast prior to agreeing the precept. Current precept levels comfortably cover expenses and contribute to a reserve to fund optional projects. Current reserves provide a buffer of more than 5 years recurring expenses.	Satisfactory
8	Finance	Financial records	The accounts submitted and published are not an accurate reflection of reality	Significant	Low	Councillors review income and expenses each quarter as well as the full accounts at the end of the financial year. The year- end accounts are also reviewed by an independent external auditor.	Satisfactory
9	Finance	Cash	Parish funds are lost due to theft / dishonesty	Significant	Low	No cash float is utilised, all payments are by bank transfer. Any reimbursement to a councillor for a self-funded expense must be supported by a fully explanatory invoice and is reviewed and authorised by both the Treasurer and Chairman.	Satisfactory
10	Finance	Banking	Suppliers are incorrectly paid	Significant	Low	Supplier bank account details are supplied on invoice or by email. The banking system confirms the account name when the payee account is being set up. The value is taken directly from the invoice with confirmation from the councillor responsible that it is acceptable to proceed with payment.	Satisfactory
11	Finance	Banking	There is fraudulent use of parish funds	Significant	Low	Payments from parish funds are made by bank transfer only, no cash float is utilised. All payments require the online authorisation of both the Treasurer and the Chairman. All payees and transactions are fully recorded within the banking system.	Satisfactory

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12	Finance	Banking	Suppliers are mistakenly not paid	Significant	Low	Responsibility for obtaining and confirming invoices is clearly identified according to individual councillor roles. Treasurer raises payment according to invoice payment terms, and immediately notifies Chairman by email that payment is ready for second authorisation.	Satisfactory
13	Finance	Value for money	The council pays too much for a product / service	Significant	Low	Three quotes are obtained for all new payments. Reasonable efforts are made to ensure that all quotes are on a like-for-like basis and fully meet the council's requirements.	Satisfactory
14	Finance	Parish records	Financial records are at risk of loss due to fire / flooding / theft	Significant	Low	All paper records are held in the home of the Treasurer. The property is protected by a fire and intruder alarm and has never been subject to flooding. Accounts are kept in an Excel spreadsheet on a secure laptop hard drive, with a cloud back-up using MS OneDrive. Access to the spreadsheet is held by both the Treasurer and Chairman. Full details of all bank transactions are securely held within the bank's online system.	Satisfactory
15	Infrastructure	Safety	An asset owned by the council presents a safety hazard to members of the public	Critical	Low	All new assets are risk assessed by the councillors during quarterly meetings and reviewed annually. If existing assets are assessed to be at significant risk / maintenance is arranged obtaining cheapest like for like quote, with appropriate risk assessments being completed on completion of maintenance work. If assets become uneconomical, precepts will be reviewed, together with assessing necessity of the asset and disposal of it if required and if it is a significant hazard.	Satisfactory

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16	Infrastructure	Insurance	Insurance cover is not sufficient to cover the potential risks faced by the council	Significant	Low	Councillors review insurance annually and obtain at least 3 quotes when renewing insurance, after the conclusion of the insurance term. Reasonable efforts are made to ensure that all quotes are on a like-for-like basis and fully meet the council's requirements. Whenever a new commitment / insurance cover is required, a quote is obtained from the insurance company to ensure adequate cover at all times. All foreseeable risks are accessed at renewal and bespoke parish council insurance obtained.	Satisfactory
17	Infrastructure	Parish records	Records are at risk of loss due to fire / flooding / theft	Significant	Low	Any changes to council assets, as well as the scope of insurance to cover them, are reviewed at council meetings and published accordingly.	Satisfactory
18	IT	Email	Councillor email addresses cannot be accessed	Critical	Low	The email server is part of a fully resilient multi-site system, hosted by an accredited supplier undertaking weekly secure backups, and stored remotely. Service Level Agreement in place to provide recovery within 24 hours, which is more than adequate for council business. Mobile phones can be used for communication in an emergency.	Satisfactory
19	IT	Parish records	Records are at risk of loss due to fire / flooding / theft	Significant	Low	Servers are fully resilient, part of a multi-site system, hosted by an accredited supplier undertaking weekly secure backups, and stored remotely.	Satisfactory
20	IT	Website	The server hosting the council's website experiences a technical fault, making the website unavailable	Significant	Low	The web server is part of a fully resilient multi-site system, hosted by an accredited supplier undertaking weekly secure backups, and stored remotely. Service Level Agreement in place to provide recovery within 24 hours, which is more than adequate for council business (website is not transactional).	Satisfactory
21	IT	Website maintenance	The person updating the site is temporarily not available (holiday / sickness)	Significant	Low	Website updates are very rarely time critical. The Chairman has password backup and training if required. The website hosting company can also provide admin support at a cost, if needed.	Satisfactory

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22	Planning	Applications	The council gives inaccurate feedback to Wiltshire Council.	Significant	Low	All councillors are consulted for their feedback regarding a planning application, and the resulting council response is also copied to councillors for their information.	Satisfactory
23	Planning	Applications	The council fails to give feedback to Wiltshire Council within the required timeframe.	Significant	Low	The Wiltshire Council deadline is clearly communicated to all councillors, and the council's response is monitored / coordinated by one councillor responsible for meeting the deadline.	Satisfactory
24	Planning	Parish records	Records are at risk of loss due to fire / flooding / theft	Significant	Low	All planning applications, associated documents and council responses are held on the Wiltshire Council planning website, available for all councillors to access.	Satisfactory