



WHIXALL PARISH COUNCIL
Business and Finance Risk Assessment 2025-26

Approved May 2024

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. The Council is aware that although some risks can never be eliminated fully, it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk, which:

- identifies the subject;
- identifies what the risk may be;
- identifies the level of risk;
- evaluates the management and control of the risk and records findings; and
- reviews, assesses and revises procedures if required.

It should be noted that the Council has a separate Business Continuity Plan which should be read in conjunction with this risk assessment.

MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	The Council has a separate business continuity plan. All files and recent records are kept at the Clerk's home. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed, Chairman to contact Clerk's family for records and SALC for advice.	Review when necessary.
Meeting Premises	Adequacy Health and Safety	L	Meetings are held in the Social Centre. All premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and any Public who attend from a health & safety and comfort aspect.	Adequate
Council Records	Loss through theft, fire, damage	M	Current papers are held at the Clerk's home. Archived papers have been stored in the County Archive.	Damage or theft is unlikely and so provision adequate.
Council Electronic Records	Loss through damage, fire, corruption of	M	Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerk's laptop which uses virus protection.	

	computer		Files are backed- up to OneDrive at least monthly	
FINANCE				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
General	Poor Financial management	L	Standing Orders and Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Maintain an effective budget control/ financial reporting system. Quarterly budget report is considered by Full Council. Internal audit. Reserves Policy adopted and reviewed annually. Business Continuity Policy in place to manage disaster recovery and business continuity risks reviewed annually. Monthly reconciliation of all bank accounts against cashbook.	Adequate
Budget	Failure to set and monitor a proper budget b	L	Final budget agreed by Parish Council every January. Budget Monitored throughout the year. Quarterly budget reports presented at the next PC meeting.	Adequate
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	Sound budgeting when establishing the level of the annual precept – the Council receives bank reconciliations/cash book reports at each meeting and a detailed budget prior to agreeing the precept. Precept is set as a result of a full report detailing requirements and outlining impact on council tax levels.	Adequate
	Request not submitted	L	Part of the Clerk's annual schedule to submit in January	Adequate
	Not paid by SC	L	General reserve is adequate to pay at least 3 months of Council commitments should SC fail to pay the precept.	Adequate
Record keeping	Inadequate financial records	M	Standing Orders and Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Regular checks of bank reconciliation against statements made by appointed Councillor. Internal auditor reviews accounts systems. Council records all financial transactions using EasyPC.	Adequate
Payments	Failure to maintain an	L	All payments to be supported by invoice.	Adequate

	effective payments system		<p>All detail and payment to be entered on EasyPC. All payments to be approved by council and recorded in the minutes. All invoices scanned and sent to signatories along with screenshot of authorisation page from Banking website prior to approval. Once approved at Full Council, all payments to be authorised by two members on the unity bank site. Authorising Councillors responsible for the scrutiny of the unity payments sheet against invoices prior to authorisation. All expenditure to be subject to sound budgetary control. Councillors with authority to authorise payments via internet banking system are responsible for keeping passwords safe and having appropriate firewalls, anti virus, anti spyware software on computers/phones in line with financial regulations. New supplier payments made through internet banking – bank account details on invoice must be checked and signed by RFO to validate accuracy of the account details loaded on the system.</p>	
Suppliers	Failure to mitigate against supplier fraud, including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls.		<p>When a new supplier is set up for an online payment the supplier is telephoned to check that the account details on the invoice are correct to mitigate the risk. Additionally, UTB validates bank accounts prior to paying a new beneficiary.</p>	Adequate
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L	<p>An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements. Employers Liability, Public Liability and Fidelity Guarantee are statutory requirements.</p>	<p>Adequate Review provision and compliance annually</p>
Banking	Inadequate checks	L	<p>The Council has adopted a formal procedure for approving payments online (F4 Process for approving Payments). Financial regulations are followed.</p>	<p>Adequate. Review Financial Regulations annually or as</p>

			Bank reconciliations are checked and presented at every meeting.	updated.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has no petty cash or float. Cash transactions made by the Clerk, are reimbursed on production of a receipt or invoice.	Adequate
Financial controls and records	Inadequate checks	L	Reconciliations prepared by RFO for each meeting and checked by a Councillor who is not a signatory. Two signatories must approve any payments. Internal and external audit. Any financial obligation must be resolved and clearly minuted before any commitment. All payments must be resolved and clearly minuted. Any s137 payments must be recorded at time of approval	Adequate
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L	The Council has a model publication scheme in place.	Continue to monitor and report any impacts made under Freedom of Information Act
Clerk	Loss of Clerk	M	Sufficient funds should be maintained for recruiting and training a new Clerk.	Funds available in General Reserve and or training budget.
	Fraud	L	Internal controls are in place. The requirements of Fidelity Guarantee insurance must be adhered to.	Adequate
	Actions undertaken	L	Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice.	Membership of SALC and SLCC maintained. Monitor performance and meet requests for training and literature.
	Salary/tax paid incorrectly	L	Salary payments checked and minuted at Council meetings. Council registered for PAYE, and payslips produced using HMRC software. PAYE paid monthly to HMRC.	Adequate
Elections	Cost of holding an election (risk highest in election year).	M	To reduce the risk, the Council has set aside earmarked reserves to cover election costs.	Adequate

Grants and Donations	Power to Pay	M	Clerk to advise / decision minuted.	Adequate
	Grant not used for intended purpose	M	Recipients to provide a report on their use of the grant.	Adequate
VAT Reclaim	Reclaiming incorrectly	L	Financial regulations set out the requirements.	Adequate
	Failing to reclaim	L	On clerk's schedule for March	Adequate
	Not paid by HMRC	L	Monitored by Clerk	Adequate
	VAT analysis	M	Detailed records are kept in the cashbook. Receipts / invoices retained.	Adequate
Reserves	Adequacy (General)	L	Clerk to report quarterly and at budget setting	Clerk's opinion/Members decision
	Adequacy (Earmarked)	L	Earmarked reserves are set up to address identified risks	Clerk's opinion/Members decision
	EMR not used for intended purpose	L	Financial Regulations – can only be spent by resolution.	Adequate
Annual Return (AGAR)	Not submitted within time limits	L	On the Clerk's annual schedule and is completed and returned in line with requirements.	Adequate
ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Land and Property Assets	Loss or damage	M	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items.	Regular inspections required.
	Injury to member of the public		Public liability insurance is held.	
	Valued wrongly	L	Value of assets checked annually	Adequate
	Unexpected repair costs	M	Earmarked reserves for minor repairs. Insurance in place. General reserve kept at sufficient level for emergencies. Schedule of annual inspections introduced.	Continue to review.
	Increasing costs for managing the Marlot as a Local Nature Reserve	M	Marlot liaison group is in place to work with the MCG voluntary group and make future management recommendations. Council to ensure these are financially prudent and sustainable.	Continue to review.

LIABILITY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council and to be resolved and clearly minuted.	Adequate Consider GPC..
Minutes/agendas Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements.	Adequate
	Non-compliance with Statutory requirements	L	Minutes are approved and signed at next meeting Minutes and agendas are published according to legal requirements.	Adequate
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance is in place, risk assessment of any individual event undertaken	Adequate
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	Undertake adequate training, seek advice from SALC Insurance in place. Contract in place.	Adequate
	Failure to comply with pension regulator		Clerk is enrolled in NEST pension scheme. Compliance declared 2025.	
Legal liability	Legality of activities	L	Clerk to seek/give advice on legality as required..	Adequate
	Proper and timely reporting via minutes	L	Council always receives and approves minutes at next meeting.	Adequate
	Proper document control	L	Clerk responsible for retention of documents according to policy and law.	Adequate
COUNCILLORS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members' interests	Conflict of interest	M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of the meeting.	Adequate
Members' interests	Register of members interests	L	Register of members interest form should be reviewed on an annual basis.	Members to take responsibility
Members' Actions	Reputational Damage	L	Council has adopted the Members' Code of Conduct.	Adequate

WHIXALL PARISH COUNCIL
Business and Financial Risk Assessment Schedule
Updated September 2025

ITEM	FREQUENCY	LAST REVIEWED	COMMENTS/ACTION
Parish Council Insurance			
Public and Employers Liability	Annually	June 2025	
Money and Fidelity Guarantee	Annually	June 2025	
Personal Accident	Annually	June 2025	
Assets			
Inspection	Annually	May 2025	To be completed by October each year.
Valuation	Annually	April 2025	
Financial Matters			
Banking Arrangements	Annually	Sept 2025	
VAT return completed	Annually	April 2025	
Budget agreed, monitored, reported	Quarterly	April 2025	
Precept requested	Annually	Jan 2025	
Payments approval procedure	Annually	Sept 2024	
Internal check of procedures	Annually	April 2025	
Clerk's salary reviewed and documented	Bi Annually ¹	April 2025	Increment paid April 2025, pay award to be approved September 2025
Bank reconciliation & records checked by Councillor	Each meeting	April 2025	
Internal audit	Annually	May 25	
External audit	Annually	n/a	Exempt - Income/expenditure below £25k
Administration			
Minutes properly numbered	Ongoing	April 25	
Asset register available/updated	Ongoing	April 25	

¹ to agree increments and approve national payrise.

Financial regulations reviewed	Annually	April 25	Approved in May 25
Standing Orders reviewed	Annually	April 25	Approved in May 25
Risk assessment reviewed	Annually	April 25	For Approval in September 2025
General Power of Competence confirmed	Annually	n/a	
Back up of computer records	Monthly (min)	June 2025	
Employers Responsibilities			
Contract of employment in place	Ongoing	June 2025	In place since July 2018
Written arrangements with contractors	Ongoing	April 2025	Grass cutting contract
Member's responsibilities			
Code of Conduct adopted	Ongoing		No change unless Shropshire Council amend their Code.
Register of interests completed, updated	Ongoing	June 2025	New Council May 2025
Register of gifts/Hospitality	Ongoing		No gifts to date
Declaration of Interests minuted	Ongoing		No standing declarations. Agenda item for every meeting.

Current Version	September 2025
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	May 2026