

## Highley Parish Council Risk Assessment 2023/24

***“The greatest risk facing a Parish Council is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected of the Council.”***

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the employer to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the employer should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible. Making sure that all employees are made aware of the results of the risk assessment. 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. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

- ✍ Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- ✍ Identify what the risk may be.
- ✍ Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings. ✍ Review, assess and revise if required.

<b>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT</b>				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	L	All files and recent records are kept at the Clerk's office and not at home. The Clerk makes regular back-ups of files to an external removable hard drive. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chair to contact SALC for advice.	Existing procedures adequate.  Review scope for sharing information on a shared drive.
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to SDC. An amount not received by SDC. Loss of Parish Grant.	L L L M	The Council reviews the Precept requirement annually at the December meeting and reviews the presented budget update information, including actual position and projected position to year end and estimated figures for the next financial year. With this information, the Council agrees the precept amount to be requested from Shropshire District Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing to SDC. The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (approx. April time). The Council needs also to have adequate reserves to deal with an emergency,	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out requirements and expectations. The Council has appointed an independent internal audit to review processes.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.

Bank and banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking, cheques, and reconciliation of accounts using Rialtas software. The bank may make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts and when the statements arrive. The Clerk reviews the Council's banking arrangements regularly. Chair and Vice Chair of HP Council have electronic access view to HP Council Bank statements etc.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary and bank signatory list, when necessary, especially after an AGM and an election. Monitor the bank statements monthly.  Look into creating dual signature access.
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Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. The Council dissuade people from paying cash wherever possible. Finance is a standing item on Council agenda. Chair and Vice-Chair have electronic access, view Council Bank statements etc.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods not supplied but billed. Incorrect invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Loss of stock Unpaid invoices	L L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. At each Council meeting, the list of invoices awaiting approval is approved. The Council has minimal stocks; these are checked and monitored by the Clerk. Unpaid invoices to the Council are pursued, and progress reported to Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay. Authorisation of Council to pay.	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minutes and listed accordingly if a payment is made.	Existing procedure adequate.
Best value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly. Overspend on services.	L M	As per Financial Regulations, normal Parish Council practice would be to seek, if possible, minimum of two quotations for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods requested. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender and report to the Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.
<b>FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H / M / L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
Salaries and assoc. costs	Salary paid incorrectly. Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to HMRC	L L L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees at Council meetings (currently just the Clerk) and has a contract of employment. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council and based on agreed NJC rates.	Existing system generally adequate. Clerk required to prove that Tax and NI have been paid. All copies and statements are kept in invoices file.

Clerk/Other workers (voluntary/casual)	Loss of Clerk Actions are undertaken.	L L L	A contingency arrangement in place with the neighbouring parish council to cover an unexpected loss of clerk. The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.	Existing procedure adequate. Monitor working conditions, training and support. Need to consider the position of the caretaker service.
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	L/M	The risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having an election as this is a legal requirement democratic process. Sufficient reserves in place to cover this.	Existing procedure adequate.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate
Annual return (AGAR)	Submit within time limits	L	Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within the time limit. Regular reports to Council on timescales and requirements.	Existing procedures adequate.

### **FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H / M / L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
Legal powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minutes shared at Full Parish Council Meetings.	All activities and payments recorded and minuted.
Council records - paper	Loss through theft fire damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the office of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, documents for ownership of property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Recent materials are in a filing cabinet. Older records are to be archived to Shropshire Archives.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provide for adequately with electronic back-ups kept separately.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage Corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on external hard drive at the Clerk's home.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance	L L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Ensure compliance measures are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance provision annually.
Data protection	Policy Provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency (ICO) .	Existing procedure is adequate.

<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H / M / L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
Bus Shelters and benches/bins	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L L	An asset register is kept up to date, and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks and risk assessment made by the Members of the Parish Council or Clerk. Emergency arrangements in place, including reporting of incidents	Existing procedure adequate.
Noticeboards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Roadside safety	L L	The Council has four notice boards sited around the Parish. There is, insurance cover, and inspected regularly by the Clerk - any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate.

<b>LIABILITY</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H / M / L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
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.	Existing procedure adequate.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Business conduct	L L	Minutes and agenda are produced with the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings managed by the Chair.	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required). Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Public Liability	Risk of third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance is in place. Risk assessments regularly carried out to comply with the requirements.	Existing procedures adequate. Ensure risk assessments are carried out.
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities Proper and timely reporting via Minutes Proper document control	M L L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves Minutes of monthly meetings. Retention of documents policy in place.	Existing procedures adequate.

**COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Risk(s) Identified</b>	<b>H / M / L</b>	<b>Management/Control of Risk</b>	<b>Review/Assess/Revise</b>
Members interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members' interests	M M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of the meeting. Register of Members Interest forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors. Code of Conduct Scheme in place which members are signatories to	Existing procedure adequate. Members to take responsibility to update their Register.