

"Parish Councils are responsible for the conduct of public business and for spending public money, as well as being accountable for ensuring that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. In discharging this accountability, public bodies and their managements (both members and officers) are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs and the stewardship of the resources in their care."

Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A practitioners Guide

INSURE; DELEGATE; MANAGE

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, ensuring 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.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risks(s) identified	Likelihood H / M / L	Impact H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Councillors	Losing Councillor membership or having more than 6 vacancies at one time (just over half of Council) – Total number of councillors is 10	Low	High	When a vacancy arises, there is a legal process to follow. This either leads to a bye-election or into a co-option process. An election is out of the Parish Council's control. The Co-option process begins with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting, then appointment. If there are more than 7 vacancies at any one time, the Council becomes inquorate, the district Council may, by order, appoint persons to fill vacancies pending the election of new Councillors and their taking office.	The Existing procedures, both at Parish and District level, are adequate to cover this. Review once per year. July 2025- We are currently at full Council and have no vacancies available.
Business Continuity	Risk of the Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	Low	High	The Council has one employee – the Clerk. The clerk is issued with a computer, which is stored at home. There is no backup completed of the computer as all files are stored online via office 365.	July 2025 - The Clerk should provide the Chairman with a list of current passwords for all necessary sites / access.
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to District Council in time Amount not received	Low	High	Budget-v-Spend reports are submitted to Parish Council regularly. To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council completes a thorough review of its budget and spend in January of each year. At this meeting, projected income and expenditure figures for the following year are discussed based on the previous 2 years finances. Using this information, the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested by Epping Forest District Council. This figure is signed by the Chairman and Clerk, and submitted in writing to EFDC. Bank reconciliations are produced at regular intervals at Full Parish Council meetings showing the status of income and expenditure for the prior month(s), together with bank balances.	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial Records	Inadequate Records Financial Irregularities.	Low	High	One internal audit is completed each year. A full copy of the subsequent reports are submitted to Parish Council under a specific agenda item for review. The Clerk manages the	July 2025 – New auditor has been appointed.

				<p>internal audit process. The minimum retention period of financial documents is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt & Payment Accounts - Indefinite (Archive) • Receipt books of all kinds - 6 years (VAT) • Bank statements of all accounts - Last completed Audit year (Audit) • Bank paying in books - last completed audit year (Audit) • Cheque book stubs - last completed audit year (Audit) • Quotations and Tenders - 6 years (Limitation Act 1980) • Paid invoices - 6 years (VAT) • Paid Cheques - 6 years (Limitation Act 1980) • VAT Records - 6 years (VAT) • Petty cash - 6 years (Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980) • Timesheets - last completed audit year (Audit) • Wages books - 12 years - Superannuation <p>There is some missing information for years prior to 2022/2023, however since this time all information is available.</p>	
Bank and Banking	Inadequate Checks, Bank mistakes, loss, charges, loss of Signatories	Low	High	<p>The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques, and reconciliation of accounts. There Council banks with Unity Bank, and there are currently 3 signatories for Lloyds Account: Cllr Action, Cllr Funnell and Cllr Bosworth. All cheques / payment requires two signatories. Each invoice is checked against the payment, and signed by both signatories. On-Line Banking has been authorised by the Parish Council. The process being that a minimum of two Councillors sign the relevant invoice, authorising Clerk to instruct the payment via Unity bank. The two Councillors then log on and authorise the payments. Councillors are unable to instruct payments and the Clerk is unable to Authorise.</p>	July 2025 – Existing procedure is adequate.
Cash / Loss	Loss through theft of dishonesty	Low	High	<p>The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements. Cash / Cheques received should be banked as soon as possible, however such receipts very rarely occur. There is one internal audit per year, and one external audit. The Parish Council is insured for this.</p>	July 2025 - Existing procedure is adequate. Councils insurance covers this issue.

Litigation	Potential risk of legal action being taken against the council	Low	High	The Council has public liability insurance which covers general personal injury claims where the council is found to be at fault. Annual inspection of all Parish Council owned assets takes place once per year.	July 2025 - Existing procedure is adequate. Insurance is adequate, however risk can never be fully covered. Photographs and Written Report should be kept of all Assets
Monies payable without precept authorisation	Failure of authority to spend	Low	High	The Council precepts annually for any costs in anticipates will be needed for the following financial year. If, during the year, spend is required for which no precept authorisation is in place, it will consider the use of S137 spending (which for 2025/2026 is £11.10 per electorate.	July 2025 - Existing procedure is adequate.
Charges / rental	Failure to pay charges / rentals / failure to receive rental income.	Low	Medium	The Parish Council has no rental income	N/A
Salaries and Associated costs	Salary incorrectly paid Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid Wrong deductions of NI and Tax Unpaid Tax and NI	Low	Medium	The Clerk uses Payroll software to complete salary calculation. Clerk is on a fixed salary. Payments of the Clerks salary are made via online banking, and authorised by two signatories as detailed earlier. There is an annual internal and external audit. Salaries are detailed and approved at each and every Parish Council meeting. The Clerk has a contract of employment which details her salary.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Employees	Loss of key personnel staff, fraud by staff, H&S	Low	High	The loss of the Clerk would be problematic. On computer files are stored online, so accessible by any computer subject to having the correct access details. The Three Point authorisation process for payments, along with regular bank reconciliations and audits negates this issue.	July 2025 - Provide password details to Chairman
VAT	Failure to reclaim	Low	Medium	The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements. VAT is claimed each year, after year end. The VAT reclaims are reviewed by the Internal Auditor. The previous issue with the online government gateway has now been resolved.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Employers Annual Return	Failure to submit	Low	Medium	The Employer Annual Return is completed before 19th April each financial year.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.

Internal Audit	Failure to Complete	Low	Medium	Internal Audits are completed once per year. The internal Auditor is supplied with the relevant documents and access to all elements of the Councils operations.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Annual Return	Failure to Complete / Time Limits	Low	Medium	Annual return is completed and signed by the Council. It is provided to the Internal Auditor for review and signing. It is approved at a Council meeting, and the minute reference recorded in the Annual Return. Copies of the return are filed accordingly.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Minutes / Agendas / Statutory Notices	Accuracy and Legality	Low	Low	All minutes and agendas are produced using the prescribed method of the Clerk, and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the following meeting. Individual pages are also initialled by the Councillor signing the minutes. Minutes and agendas are posted onto the Parish Councils website. Notices of meetings are erected onto the Parish Councils notice board in accordance with the Statutory minimum time requirements. Details are also placed on to the Parish Councils website.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Members Interests	Failure to register an interest	Low	Medium	All members are required to complete a register of interest. Copies of this register are available on Epping Forest District Councils website. Councillors are aware of their obligations in terms of registration of interests, and that they cannot be guided by the Clerk. An item is on every agenda at which time Councillors may register their interest.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy, cost, compliance, Fidelity Guarantee	Low	High	The insurance for the Council is reviewed on an Annual Basis, with all items being reviewed. The fidelity guarantee is set at £250,000 which is considered more than adequate.	July 2025- Existing procedure is adequate
Data Protection	Policy / Provision	Low	High	The Council has a freedom of information policy which is reviewed annually. The Clerk is aware of the basics of Data protection legislation, however further training would be helpful. This Parish Council is now registered with the Information Commissioners Office.	July 2025: Training for Clerk

Signed by the Chair of High Ongar

Parish Council

Toby Acton

Presiding at the Parish Council Meeting Dated	2 nd July 2025