

# Haslington Parish Council

## Risk Assessment 2024

### Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated, and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

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 focuses 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.
- Reviews, assesses, and revises procedures if required.

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
Financial Control	Failure to maintain proper control resulting in the Parish Council to set a legal budget	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal Financial management supported by Financial Regulations and Standing Orders</li> <li>▪ Monthly reviews by the clerk</li> <li>▪ Quarterly reviews resolved by the full council.</li> <li>▪ Annual spending plans</li> </ul>	Clerk  Finance Committee  Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarterly at Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial Regulations</li> <li>▪ Standing Orders</li> </ul>
Precept	Adequacy of precept	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The precept is an agenda item at the December meeting of Council.</li> <li>▪ Council will receive a budget statement and the amount requested based on spend and estimated expenditure for the next financial year.</li> <li>▪ Clerk to submit request to Cheshire East Council as soon as practicably possible after the December meeting.</li> </ul>	Clerk  Finance Committee  Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annually</li> <li>▪ Monthly at Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial Regulations</li> </ul>
	Precept not applied for	Low			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annually</li> </ul>	

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	Precept not received from Cheshire East Council	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to inform Council.</li> <li>Council to ensure that general reserves are kept at 25% of the Councils net reserve to enable Council work / projects / activities to continue.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to request acknowledgement of receipt from Cheshire East Council</li> <li>Monthly at Council</li> </ul>	
	Insufficient precept and revenue generated to fund Council operations and projects	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget setting process will be implemented</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly financial checks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Regulations</li> <li>Standing Orders</li> </ul>
VAT Re-Claim	Not claimed within 3 years (maximum back period for which claims can be made)	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely claimed – at least once a year or when a sufficient number of invoices are received.</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Finance Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular checks</li> <li>Diary in</li> </ul>	
Payments	Unlawful expenditure / improper payment	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All requests for payment are submitted to Council.</li> <li>Decisions on payments are made at Council via a resolution</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At each meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations</li> <li>Standing Orders</li> </ul>
Fraud	Misappropriation of funds	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All payments are presented to the Council.</li> <li>Expenses claims are completed.</li> <li>Fidelity guarantee cover included in the insurance.</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly financial checks by the full Council with the presented schedule of payments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations</li> <li>Insurance Policy</li> </ul>
General Reserves	Failure to maintain proper financial controls resulting in the inability of the Council to carry out projects/activity	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal financial management is supported by financial regulations.</li> <li>Quarterly review of bank statements</li> <li>Annual spending plans will be formulated.</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular check</li> <li>All finances are reported to the Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations</li> <li>Insurance Policy</li> </ul>

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 25% of the council's net expenditure is to be kept available.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds transferred to CCLA account to limit risk</li> </ul>	
Earmarked Reserves	Failure to maintain proper financial controls resulting in the inability of the Council to carry out projects/activity	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal financial management is supported by financial regulations.</li> <li>Monthly review of bank statements</li> <li>Annual spending plans will be formulated.</li> <li>Where projects are projected or span financial years, funds will be ringfenced</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular checks</li> <li>All finances are reported to the Council.</li> <li>Funds to be transferred to new CCLA account to limit risk.</li> <li>Reports produced to Council for formal decision/resolution on what needs to be Earmarked</li> </ul>	
Invoices	Overpayment	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invoices are listed on the payments for approval at each Council meeting.</li> <li>Internal Members checks will be carried out.</li> <li>Internal and external audit checks</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Regulations</li> </ul>
Reporting and auditing	Lack of information	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clerk to inform Council at each meeting of accounts and breakdown of payments and receipts.</li> <li>All payments are approved by the Council.</li> <li>Members' audits will take place to check for accuracy</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member audits will be carried out.</li> <li>Procedures regarding purchases and expenditures are written into Policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Regulations</li> <li>Standing Orders</li> <li>Procedures are cascaded</li> </ul>
Banking	Inadequate records	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payments are made via BACS when possible.</li> <li>All payments are presented to the council at each meeting.</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member audits will be carried out.</li> <li>Procedures regarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Regulations</li> <li>Standing Order</li> </ul>

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 members check payments against invoices received.</li> <li>▪ Member audits established.</li> <li>▪ Council has relevant policies and procedures in place.</li> <li>▪ Internal and external audits in place</li> <li>▪ Payments are made on invoice.</li> <li>▪ Grants and funding requested are processed when relevant forms are completed and submitted to the Council.</li> <li>▪ Small number of Direct Debits have been set up, but these are reported to the Council and invoices are submitted retrospectively.</li> </ul>	Council	purchases and expenditures are written into Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member Audit</li> </ul>
Noticeboards	Non-display of statutory information, Loss, damage, maintenance, etc.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statutory information is displayed in lockable noticeboards.</li> <li>▪ No formal arrangements are in place other than insurance cover.</li> </ul>	Clerk Council		
Grants and support	Power to pay	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requests are made to the Clerk.</li> <li>▪ Considered at Council</li> <li>▪ Applications are considered for formal resolution at Council.</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submitted to Council after receipt of application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial Regulations</li> </ul>
Meetings	Failure to hold meetings	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council meets every month at present</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calendar of meetings is prepared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standing Orders</li> </ul>

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extraordinary meetings can be held if necessary.</li> <li>▪ Member of Council can take Minutes should the Clerk be temporarily unavailable.</li> <li>▪ ChALC to provide support if the Clerk is unavailable for a prolonged period.</li> </ul>	
Minutes / Agendas / Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Non-compliance with statutory requirements	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agendas and Minutes are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements.</li> <li>▪ Minutes are approved and signed at the next meeting.</li> <li>▪ Agendas and Minutes are displayed according to legal requirements.</li> <li>▪ Business on the Agenda will be managed by the Chairman. In their absence, a Member of Council will be appointed to Chair that meeting in their absence.</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clerk and Members to undertake training.</li> <li>▪ Standing Orders in place</li> <li>▪ Members to adhere to the Code of Conduct as per the model from Cheshire East Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Meetings	Ultra vires (acting beyond powers)	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clerk advises Council.</li> <li>▪ Information cascaded to Members.</li> <li>▪ Guidance provided by ChALC, NALC and SLCC</li> </ul>	Clerk Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Government Act 1972</li> <li>▪ Other relevant legislation</li> </ul>

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training available to Members and the Clerk</li> </ul>			
Meetings	Not quorate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient number of Councillors available to hold the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Variable location of meeting venue</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meetings diarised in advance.</li> <li>▪ Future meetings are listed on the Council website to make Members aware of dates.</li> <li>▪ Meetings for the full council are resolved for the following year.</li> <li>▪ Clerk to highlight clearly on the agenda the location if different to usual.</li> <li>▪ Meeting times remain consistent to reduce confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Government Act 1972</li> </ul>
Meetings	Unlawful meetings	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summons/notices / agendas properly issued giving public notice.</li> <li>▪ These need to be published in accordance with guidance and legislation</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summons/notices/ agendas are published approximately 5 days (3 clear days) in advance of meetings on Council noticeboards to ensure that they meet legal requirements.</li> <li>▪ Summons/notices / agendas are also</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standing Orders</li> <li>▪ Local Government Act 1972</li> <li>▪ Transparency Code</li> </ul>

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					published on the Councils website.	
Business Continuity	Parish Council unable to continue its business owing to unexpected circumstances	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Day-to-day files are kept with the Clerk.</li> <li>▪ Archive files are kept at the Yoxall Community Centre</li> <li>▪ Electronic files are held on Dropbox.</li> <li>▪ If the Clerk is indisposed, a Member of Council can take the Minutes until the Clerk is available.</li> <li>▪ In the event of prolonged absence, the Cheshire Association for Local Councils (ChALC) can be asked to provide services and support and support the appointment of an Interim Clerk</li> <li>▪ During a pandemic, if legislation allows, Council meetings will be conducted online to allow council business and meetings to continue.</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Files are archived at least yearly.</li> <li>▪ Electronic files are backed up on Dropbox remotely.</li> <li>▪ Regularly review, implement, and adopt legislation and regulations to ensure the Council is compliant and continues to meet legal requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain subscription/membership to ChALC.</li> <li>▪ COVID legislation</li> </ul>
Work commissioned by Council	Insufficient quotations received, work commissioned incorrectly or works go over budget	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When a contractor is to be used for work, which over the course of a year totals less than £25,000, three quotations should be obtained wherever possible.</li> <li>▪ Contractors must have appropriate liability insurance.</li> <li>▪ Projects and research to be carried out before undertaking activities.</li> <li>▪ Clerk and Council to regularly monitor projects to ensure they are effectively and efficiently carried out.</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reports produced to Council.</li> <li>▪ Working Groups or Sub-Committees established for set projects/activities.</li> <li>▪ Members audit to check and report back to Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial Regulations</li> <li>▪ Standing Orders</li> <li>▪ Procurement Policy</li> </ul>

Item	Risk Identified	Level High Medium Low	Management of Risk	Action	Internal Audit Frequency	Policy Document (If relevant)
Remuneration and other costs	Remunerations calculated and tax and NI implications	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has one employee (the Clerk)</li> <li>Clerks' remunerations are reviewed annually and based on industry remuneration scales as per NALC guidance.</li> <li>Clerks' salary is approved by the Council annually.</li> <li>Tax and NI are dealt with by an appointed payroll provider</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports presented to Council.</li> <li>Salary &amp; NI detailed on the schedule of payments each month.</li> <li>Payslip checked by 2 members.</li> </ul>	Financial Regulations
Councillors and the Clerk	Fraud by Council, the Clerk, or contractors	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fidelity requirements included in insurance cover.</li> <li>Training arranged for the Clerk and Members to be provided with the necessary information for them to carry out duties effectively.</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members audits to be carried.</li> <li>Ongoing training to be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Financial Regulations</li> <li>Standing Orders</li> </ul>
Election costs	Risk of election costs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk is higher in an election year.</li> <li>Casual vacancies for Councillors are advertised as soon as practicably possible.</li> <li>If an election is called, the Clerk will inform Members</li> </ul>	Clerk Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular liaison with Electoral Services at Cheshire East Council</li> <li>There are little measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of holding elections as this is a democratic process</li> </ul>	
Annual Return	Failure to submit within the necessary time limits	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Annual Return is prepared by the Clerk and signed at a Council meeting.</li> <li>This is then submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and then sent to the External Auditor within set time scales</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Return completed annually.</li> <li>Member auditors to support.</li> </ul>	

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures will be in place.</li> </ul>	
Insurance	Adequate cover required.  Competitive costs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insurance is purchased each year.</li> <li>Covers public liability, fidelity cover and employer liability.</li> </ul>	Clerk  Finance Committee  Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of insurance to be carried out prior to renewal of policy.</li> <li>Insurance cover and requirements will be reported to Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations</li> </ul>
Assets	Loss or damage  Risk of damage to third parties/contractors	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review of assets to be undertaken for insurance purposes</li> <li>Asset register to be regularly updated</li> </ul>	Clerk  Finance Committee  Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asset register will be reported to the Council at least annually.</li> <li>Register will be prepared in accordance with regulations/legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations</li> <li>Accounts and audit regulations</li> </ul>
Members interests	Conflicts of interest	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members have a duty to declare any interest (pecuniary or non-pecuniary) at the start of each meeting / at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>A register of Members' interest forms is completed and published on the council website</li> </ul>	Clerk  Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members complete a Declaration of Interests when appointed.</li> <li>Members are requested to inform the Clerk should interests change and will be requested to complete a new Declaration form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standing Orders</li> <li>Financial Regulations</li> <li>Local Government Act 1972</li> </ul>
Grants	Receipt of grant funding	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council does not at present receive regular grants from outside bodies.</li> <li>Procedure and process will be formed when required.</li> </ul>	Clerk  Finance Committee		

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants will be reported to Council for a formal resolution to accept / not accept.</li> </ul>	Council		
Grants and support payable	Power to pay. Authorisation by Council to pay	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requests are reported to Council and recorded within the Minutes and in accordance with Section 137 Powers or other appropriate power</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants and donations policy</li> <li>Financial regulations</li> <li>Local Government Act 1972</li> </ul>
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council does not keep petty cash.</li> <li>Any cash transactions will be fully receipted or reimbursed on receipt of an invoice.</li> </ul>	Clerk Finance Committee Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member audits will review if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations and best practice guidance</li> </ul>
Financial	Supplier Fraud	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the Company number against the .gov website from Companies House to ensure the details supplied correspond to records.</li> <li>Check the VAT number supplied against the .gov website to ensure the details supplied correspond to records.</li> <li>Ensure that supplied bank details produce a 'match' when setting up for online payments.</li> <li>Check company validity by establishing online presences and accessibility of company information</li> </ul>	Clerk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial regulations and best practice guidance</li> </ul>
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work.</li> <li>The Council can request a fee if the work will take over 15 hours. However, the request can be resubmitted, broken down into sections, thus negating the payment of a fee.</li> </ul>	Clerk		