



FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT COVER PAGE

This Financial Risk Assessment was adopted by Fowlmere Parish Council on 17th November 2020.

Review Date	Reviewed by	Review accepted by Full Council
9th June 2022	Finance Committee	21st June 2022
16th May 2023	Full Council	16th May 2023
21st May 2024	Full Council	21st May 2024
next review May 2025		

FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – ADOPTED 17TH NOVEMBER 2020

Subject	Risk Identified	H / L / M	Management or Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Recommendations
Precept	Not submitted Not paid by DC Adequacy of precept	L	In the first instance, the District Council advises the Parish Council of the council tax base rate, which effectively is the amount of money that every £1 of Council Tax added to a Band D property, for parish purposes, will be expected to realize in any one year. To determine the amount of precept required by the Parish Council, the Chair of Finance / the Clerk prepares a budget considering all anticipated expenditure and projects to be developed, cash balances and then determines from this the amount of precept required from the District Council. The Finance Committee undertakes a full budget review. This budget is then submitted to the Parish Council who formally resolves the precept amount required by January (at the latest) and the Clerk makes the request to SCDC formally in writing as the Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is advised in April each year of the annual precept figure which is transferred via BACS transfer directly into the Parish Council's bank account. The Clerk formally advises the Parish Council of the receipt at the next available Parish Council meeting.	Adequately Controlled
Reserves (General And Earmarked)	Adequacy	L	During the planning/budget process, the adequacy of reserves is reviewed, and consideration is given to whether any sums are carried forward to the following financial year as either general reserves or earmarked reserves for particular projects.	Adequately controlled. Recommend general reserves are built into future budgets as well as earmarked reserves such as election costs, etc.
Standing Orders	Illegal authority	L	The Council has Standing Orders which set out the framework in which the Parish Council can operate. A copy of the Standing Orders is available from the Clerk if required. Standing Orders to be reviewed every year.	Adequately controlled. Reviewed every year
Financial Regulations	Illegal authority	L	In April 2019, the PC produced Financial Regulations in line with the NALC template, these were updated in July 2020. A copy of the Financial Regulations is available from the Clerk if required. Financial Regulations to be reviewed every year.	Adequately controlled. Reviewed every year
Bank and Banking	Cash handling Cash banking Loss Charges	L	The Parish Council has five bank accounts (2 current - Unity Trust and Santander - and 3 reserve accounts - Unity Trust, Santander and Cambridge Building Society). The Clerk pays all monies received into the Unity Trust current account. Where possible, all payments are made using bank transfers, or using cheques if bank transfer is not possible, drawn on the Unity Trust Bank current account, or by Direct Debit. Five Parish Councillors are authorized signatories for cheques and bank transfer from Unity Trust Bank account, and four Councillors are signatories for cheques from the Santander current account; all cheques and bank transfers are signed / authorized by any two of the Parish Councillors. The Clerk is authorised to have third party contact with the banks for telephone and postal contact. The Clerk is the receiver and keeper of all bank statements and bank papers. The Clerk prepares monthly bank reconciliations after the statements have been received to ensure all receipts and payments are in order. The bank reconciliations are circulated to the Parish Council every month.	Adequately controlled
Financial Reporting and auditing	Information Communication Compliance	L	A financial update (bank reconciliation) is included at every PC meeting and full finances at every Finance Meeting. This is signed by the respective Chairman, is maintained by the Clerk in Parish Council records and reviewed as part of the financial audit by the Internal Auditor annually.	Adequately controlled.

			An internal audit (auditor appointed by the Parish Council) and external audit (auditor appointed by the Audit Commission) is conducted annually on the financial aspects of the Council. Results are presented to the Parish Council.	
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	Petty cash is no longer kept. Cash transactions are now very rarely used.	Minimal risk
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L	As per the Financial Regulations, the Clerk will obtain 3 quotations where the value is above £3,000 and below £25,000, and shall strive to obtain 3 estimates when the price is between a £750 and £3,000. If the work is above £25,000 it will be put out to tender according to The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 At all times, the Clerk will seek value for money and ensure as far as possible that the best available terms are obtained.	Adequately controlled.
Salaries / Pension	Wrong salary paid Wrong Pension contributions paid Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid False employee Wrong deductions – NI/Tax	L	The Parish Council authorise the appointment of the Clerk and seeks advice from NALC / CAPALC regarding salary. A review of salaries is undertaken each year in line with preparing for the precept and becomes effective from 1 April each year. Payslips are produced by the Clerk monthly. The Clerk is contracted to work 48 hours per month, and this is paid by bank transfer standing order which is updated annually. If additional hours are incurred during the month the additional hours are added to the payslip and this is inspected at the next Parish Council Meeting as part of the Bills to be Paid listing. The pension contributions are increased annually in line with instructions from the Pensions Regulator, and the contributions are paid by direct debit from the Parish Council's Unity Trust account. Employee # 1 (Clerk) – Contract of Employment and job description in place and copy held in Parish Council records.	Adequately controlled.
Employers Annual Return	Submit within time limits	L	The Clerk completes the payslips and performs payroll tasks on behalf of Fowlmere PC on a monthly basis using HMRC's Basic PAYE Tools. The Employers Annual return is sent to HMRC as the Final Submission for the tax year with either the Full Payment Submission or an EPS using the Basic PAYE Tools software.	Adequately controlled.
Councillors Allowance	Councillor over-payments Income tax deduction	L	No formal allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors (other than annual Chairman's allowance of £150), however, where an out of pocket expense is incurred, this would be reimbursed back to the Parish Councillor upon display of suitable expense receipts and authorization by the Parish Council. The reimbursement would usually be in the form of a bank transfer (or a cheque if bank transfer is not possible).	Adequately controlled.
Election Costs	Risk of an election. Invoice at agreed rate.	L	Unable to manage the risk of an election. However, the Council is able to make adequate budget provision for a future election. The Clerk obtains a quotation periodically from SDCD and the Parish Council approve the budget as part of the precept planning exercise.	Adequately controlled.
Data Protection	Non-Compliance	L	Registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. The Parish Council have prepared and maintain the required documents to comply with GDPR, and have published a General Privacy Notice for the Public on the Parish Council's website. These documents will be monitored and updated as necessary.	Registration with Information Commissioner's Office on an ongoing annual basis. GDPR documents updated as required. Adequately controlled.
Freedom of Information Act - Publication Scheme	Non-Compliance with the Act - Publication Scheme	L	The PC subscribe annually to the Data Protection Policy - the model Publication Scheme issued by the Information Commissioner and produce a publication guide which sets out what information is available, by what means and the associated cost of providing that information, should a member of the public make a request. The Parish Council would be informed of any impacts to requests made.	Adequately controlled. Recommend publication guide is reviewed and updated annually

VAT	VAT analysis Maintain records Charged on purchases Re-claim within time limits	L	The Clerk analyses out any VAT charged on purchases within the accounting spreadsheets and maintains all VAT receipts within Parish Council records. The Clerk produces a VAT refund analysis periodically and makes a claim to HMRC for recovery of the amounts. The refund is received via BACS transfer and the Clerk notifies the Parish Council at the next available meeting. All documentation in relation to the process is maintained in Council records.	Adequately controlled.
Training	Lack of training can lead to incorrect decisions being taken	L	The Clerk attends regular training session where appropriate, and also attends SLCC branch meetings regularly. Parish Councillors are encouraged to attend training where applicable (whether new training or refresher training). All New Councillors should be provided with relevant information.	Adequately controlled.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Notices Statutory Documents	Accuracy of Minutes Business conducted legally	L	Minutes are produced by the Clerk and issued in draft to Parish Councillors for their review. Thereafter minutes are approved at subsequent Parish Council Meeting and signed off by the Chairman as an accurate record. Signed minutes are maintained by the Clerk and kept in Parish Council records. Approved minutes are displayed on the PC notice board and web-site, once approved, for public referral. Draft minutes released for Main PC meetings when possible. Notices, summons and agendas of Parish Council Meetings are produced within the prescribed timeframe and issued to Members of the Parish Council. The same are also displayed on Parish Council notice board and web-site once approved.	Adequately controlled
Members Interests	Conflict of Interest	L	Standard Agenda item at all meetings for Members of the Parish Council to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have to disclose in respect of any matters under discussion on the agenda. Register of Interest forms should be reviewed and updated by individual members and re-submitted within 28 days of any change occurring.	Adequately controlled
Insurance	Adequacy Cost	L	An annual review is undertaken (at the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. A comparative quotation should be obtained every couple of years to ensure best value.	Adequately controlled
Assets	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party property or individuals	L	An annual review of assets is undertaken at the time of the insurance policy renewal.	Asset register to be reviewed annually.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities Loss of income or performance Risk/damage to third parties	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed, inspected and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council.	Adequately controlled
Recreation areas	Risk/damage/injury to third Parties	L	ROSPA carries out inspections of the Play Areas and their recommendations are implemented. The play equipment is also regularly inspected by councillors (at least monthly). A separate risk assessment was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that appropriate measures were put into place to allow the Play Areas to remain operational in line with government guidance.	Adequately controlled
Notice Boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L	The Parish Council has one notice board sited on The Swan House Inn, which is included on the insurance schedule. The Clerk is mindful of roadside safety when carrying out duties at the notice board.	Adequately controlled
Benches	Risk/damage/injury to third Parties	L	The Parish Council has several benches which are regularly maintained.	Adequately controlled

Trees, Grass, Hedges and Verges	Risk/damage/injury to third Parties	L	The Parish Council has areas of grass that are maintained via a contractor. Other work in the village is undertaken by properly qualified / specialist contractors.	Adequately controlled
Meeting Locations	Adequacy Health & Safety	L	The Parish Council Meetings are held in either the Pavilion Room (Village Hall), United Reform Church or St Marys Church. The Parish Council considers the facilities are adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from a Health & Safety perspective. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began Parish Council Meetings have been held online (via Zoom), as per the NALC advice. The log-in details are displayed on the Parish Council website and in the meeting Agendas.	Adequately controlled
Parish Council Official Records and Papers	Loss through theft/fire/damage	L	The Parish Council official records and papers are stored at the home of the Clerk, and historical papers are stored in the Cemetery Chapel	Adequately controlled.
Electronic Records	Loss through theft/fire/damage/ corruption of computer	L	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Parish Council's laptop which is password protected. Back-ups are made monthly, using 'Dropbox'.	Adequately controlled.