

Germansweek Parish Council

Risk Assessment – April 2021

As part of a series of annual checks to ensure that the Parish Council is properly managed and is accountable for its actions, it is necessary to carry out a 'risk assessment'.

A risk is the likelihood of a hazard occurring. A hazard is a source of potential harm, damage or loss. So this risk assessment looks at the range of hazards that might affect the operation of the Parish Council, its Councillors or members of the public interacting with it and assesses the risk of that hazard occurring and what could be done to minimise or avoid that happening.

Subject	Hazard	Level of Risk	Risk Management	Further Action
Parish Councillors	Vacancies sometimes occur between elections. If not filled, the Council runs a higher risk of being inquorate and thereby unable to conduct its business.	Low	Have a procedure by which casual vacancies are filled in an appropriate and timely manner.	Clerk to ensure that the Monitoring Officer is informed and the appropriate notices are displayed as soon as possible.
Parish Councillors	If Councillors fail to complete their initial register of interests, or review them regularly and a conflict of interest occurs, the Council may be brought into disrepute and the business of the Council adversely affected.	Low	Newly appointed Councillors to complete a register of interests within 28 days of appointment. Councillors are required to advise the Clerk of any changes as they occur and to review their register of interests annually. This is a standing Agenda item.	Clerk to monitor the completion of registers of interests for all Councillors. Clerk to conduct an annual review by Councillors of their registers of interest at the Annual Meeting.
Financial Resources	If the Parish Council does not have proper control over its financial assets, there is potential for loss through mismanagement or fraud.	Low	Regularly reconcile banking and financial records. Ensure that no one person can commit to expenditure on behalf of the Parish Council	Reconciliations to be presented to the Council at each ordinary meeting. All expenses are authorised at Council meetings and are currently paid by cheque, or bank transfer with three signatories required.

				Authorising of payments delegated to the clerk in the event that council can't meet.
Parish Clerk	The resignation or incapacity of the Parish Council's only officer would leave it vulnerable to the interruption of the Council's business.	Medium	<p>Establish clear processes and procedures for managing the annual cycle of the Parish Council's business and its financial processes, to assist an interim appointee.</p> <p>Enable the Chair, vice-Chair or other appropriate Councillor to carry out the duties of the Parish Clerk during a period of absence or until a replacement is in post. Or alternatively consider hiring a locum through DALC, although this could have an adverse impact on any contingency funds.</p>	<p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are being kept up to date.</p> <p>An annual cycle of the Council's business and management processes should be created.</p> <p>The Council can appoint a suitable Councillor to carry out the duties of the Parish Clerk on an interim basis, should this become necessary.</p>
Legal Liability	<p>If the Parish Council does not conduct itself properly it is vulnerable to legal challenge.</p> <p>If the Parish Council does not take reasonable steps to comply with relevant statutory requirements, it may become liable for costs and/or damages.</p> <p>If the Parish Council does not have adequate insurance cover for its own activities and those of individual parish councillors, financial losses may be incurred.</p>	Low	<p>Ensure that the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are relevant, up to date and regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Ensure that the Parish Council, Parish Clerk and individual Councillors follow Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Obtain adequate insurance cover.</p>	<p>Annual review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Membership to DALC provides advice and guidance to the Parish Council on the conduct of their operations and statutory changes to regulations etc.</p> <p>Annual review of the adequacy of insurance cover.</p>

Health and Safety	<p>If members and officers of the Parish Council, or third parties, are exposed to health and safety risks, the Parish Council may become liable.</p>	Low	<p>Liability is only likely to occur in respect of premises used by and assets owned by the Parish Council.</p>	<p>Ensure that all premises used by the Parish Council can provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with health and safety inspections.</p> <p>Arrange for an annual inspection of all premises and assets owned by the Parish Council</p>
Council Records	<p>Unless key records of the Parish Council are duplicated and held on separate sites, the Parish Council is vulnerable to their loss due to fire, flood or theft.</p> <p>Unless the Parish Council has a standalone system, records held on the Parish Clerk's computer may be lost, when they are transferred from one post-holder to another.</p> <p>It may be difficult to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests.</p>	High	<p>Ensure regular backup of electronic data is made and stored separately to minimise the risk of data loss.</p> <p>Hardcopy documents which are statutorily required to be held indefinitely to be transferred to the appropriate Record Storage facility for safe keeping, once no longer required by the Parish Council.</p>	<p>The Clerk makes monthly backup copies of electronic data.</p> <p>Audit of records to be transferred to be undertaken annually by the Clerk.</p>