

Seighford Parish Council
 Financial and Operational Risk Assessment
 March 2026

A risk assessment is a systematic examination of the Council’s activities, systems, environment and operational functions, undertaken to identify potential financial, governance, operational and health & safety risks that may affect its ability to operate effectively and safeguard public resources.

This document has been produced to enable Seighford Parish Council to identify and record the key risks it faces across all of its functions, including financial management, governance, service delivery, public assets, employees, councillors and members of the public. It sets out the management and control measures in place to reduce those risks to an acceptable level, so far as is reasonably practicable. It also identifies how risks are reviewed and assessed, and where responsibility for managing each risk lies.

The purpose of this document is to provide assurance to the Council that appropriate controls are in place and operating effectively. It forms part of the Council’s overall framework of governance and internal control and supports compliance with audit, accountability and health and safety requirements. This document now incorporates both financial and operational / health & safety risks, and is reviewed annually or following significant change.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT					
Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
Insurance	Inadequate cover	L	The insurance arrangements are reviewed annually, with interim annual checking. Review of risk and adequacy of cover (loss / damage, public liability, consequential loss and fidelity guarantee) should be conducted annually.	Check limits annually and review full policy every three years Most recent review concluded that a three-year long-term agreement was the best option. Current renewal due June 2026.	Clerk, Full Council
	Cost	L			
	Compliance	L			
	Public Liability (statutory)	L	Insurance at £5,000,000 at any one event, any one period for products.		Clerk, Full Council
	Employers Liability (statutory)	L	Insurance at £10,000,000 including costs and expenses at any one event.		Clerk, Full Council
	Money	L	No cash held		Clerk, Full Council

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT					
Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
	Fidelity Guarantee	M	Insurance at £250,000. Excess at £250		Clerk, Full Council
	Property	L	General Contents: £33,000 Street Furniture: £72,000 Play Equipment: £90,000 Walls, Gates and Fences: £36,000		Clerk, Full Council
	Libel and Slander	L	Insurance at £250,000 any one period of insurance.		Clerk, Full Council
	Personal Accident	L	Clerk absence £5,000, Key person £10,000, range of personal accident benefits.		Clerk, Full Council
	Excess	L	General reserves adequate in case of claim.		Clerk, Full Council
Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its statutory duties	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Council regularly receives budget update information. At the precept meeting Council receives a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. With 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 from Stafford Borough Council. The figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing.	Review starting in November with budget process. Confirm precept requirement in January.	Clerk, Full Council

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Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
Budget Provision and Reserves	Insufficient available funds	L	A full budget needs to be submitted prior to the Precept request. This should include funds placed in reserve for future projects, a contingency fund and at least three months' running costs.	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk, Councillors
Best Value Accountability/ Procurement	Work awarded incorrectly	L	Normal Parish Council practise would be to seek, if possible, more than one quotation for any substantial work undertaken. For major work competitive tenders must be sought. If problems encountered with a contract, the Clerk would investigate the situation and report to the Council.	Procedure in Financial Regulations.	Clerk, Councillors
	Overspend on services	M		Procedure in Financial Regulations.	Clerk, Councillors
Contracts and contractors	Maintenance contractors	M	Standing orders for award of contracts and capital expenditure. Initial contracts awarded for 12 months. Subject to satisfactory performance, subsequent contracts are for three years.	Report on performance and review when appropriate.	Clerk, Councillors
Payroll and Salary	HMRC RTI Information – submit within time limits	L	The Clerk's salary is handled by an external company. Clerk is responsible for timely payment of quarterly PAYE which is automatically paid to HMRC via Direct Debit.	Current procedure adequate.	Clerk, Councillor responsible for Internal Control
	HMRC End of Year Submission / P60 – submit within time limits	L	The Clerk's salary is handled by an external company.	Current procedure adequate.	Clerk, Councillor responsible for Internal Control
	Salary paid incorrectly	L	Salary agreed and paid at bi-monthly PC meetings. Councillors who sign cheques	Current procedure adequate.	Councillors

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			to sign salary sheet. If electronic via bank transfer, Clerk raises the payment and councillors to reconcile against pay slip before releasing payment.	Quarterly checks carried out to ensure payments match payslip.	
	Unpaid tax to HMRC	L	Payments are monitored using the reports from DM Payroll Services.	Direct Debit set up for automatic payments.	Clerk, Councillor responsible for Internal Control
Employees	Fraud by staff	L	Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance adhered to with regards to fraud.	Existing procedures adequate.	Clerk, Councillors
	Health and safety	L	All employees (currently the Clerk) to be provided adequate direction and safety equipment needed to undertake their role.	Monitor health and safety requirements and insurance annually.	Clerk, Councillors
	Clerk resignation / sickness	L	Councillors may act in a temporary capacity at nil pay. Contingency required for advertising, sickness cover etc. Personal Accident weekly benefit of £200 after 14 days if unable to work. If Clerk is permanently disabled or dies lump sum of £100,000.	Review contingency in budget annually. Council require procedures for access to files/passwords and reporting of illness.	Clerk, Councillors
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks		The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements.	Financial Regulations to be reviewed annually. All payments are reviewed and reconciled quarterly by a councillor.	Clerk, Councillors

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	Bank mistakes		Monthly reconciliation – presented at bimonthly meetings.	Existing procedure adequate. All banking reconciliation is reviewed and reconciled quarterly by a councillor.	Clerk, Councillors
	Cheque mistakes		Cheques to be written by the Clerk following inspection of the invoices and signed by two Councillors on production of the Payment Schedule agreed at the PC Meeting. Cheque and cheque counterfoil to be signed or initialled. Any payments made to a signatory must not be authorised by that signatory.	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk, cheque signatories
	Electronic payments (BACS) – payments made without approval or incorrect payment.	L	All BACS payments are approved at council meetings. The Clerk is authorised only to raise all payments which is then released by two signatories. The Clerk and signatories independently verify each payment against the invoice and the approved payment list agreed by the council. Any payments made to a signatory must not be authorised by that signatory.	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk, cheque signatories
	Linked bank accounts		Where the Clerk or Councillors authorise online payments that are also linked to personal or business accounts, additional care must be taken to ensure all	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, cheque signatories

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			payments and transfers are made from and to the correct account. For internal transfers there must be a nominated bank account.		
	Credit references	L	The Bank performs credit references on cheque signatories	Existing procedure adequate	Bank
	Non-performance / delivery of third parties	L	Avoid pre-payments wherever possible. Vet suppliers thoroughly.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
Financial reporting	Information communication	L	Financial information is a regular agenda item (Finance Report) and discussed / reviewed and approved at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
	Annual accounts	L	Accounts to be closed at Council Year End 31 March and final Statement submitted to April / May Parish Council meeting for scrutiny and agreement. Clerk / RFO and Chairman to sign off.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
Financial Records	Inadequate records	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
	Financial irregularities	L	The Council appoints a nominated Councillor responsible for Internal Control who undertakes regular inspections of the Council's financial records and procedures. Any irregularities or concerns identified are reported to the next Council meeting, unless immediate action is required.	Existing procedure adequate	Councillors
Grants	Receipt of grant	L	Grants are applied for as required, in the event of an unsuccessful grant a re-	Review annually	Clerk, Councillors

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			evaluation of the project would be carried out		
	Payment of Grants and Power to pay using S137	L	Ensure that the donation is acceptable to pay under S137 or General Power of Competence. All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuting and listing accordingly if a payment is made using S137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
VAT	Reclaiming	L	<p>The Council will make at least one VAT reclaim annually using HMRC Form VAT126 following the close of the financial year, provided that the reclaim covers more than one calendar month and exceeds £100.</p> <p>For VAT to be reclaimable, the order must have been placed on behalf of the Council, the invoice must be made out to the Council, and the payment must ultimately be made from Council funds. Purchases may be made initially by councillors, officers, or other third parties acting on behalf of the Council, provided that the purchase is wholly for Council business, the Council authorises the expenditure, retains a valid VAT invoice, and reimburses the individual in full. In such cases, the individual is deemed to be acting as an agent of the Council, and the expenditure will be treated as Council</p>	Existing procedure adequate	RFO

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Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
			expenditure for VAT purposes. All supporting documentation, including invoices, receipts, expense claims and evidence of reimbursement, will be retained in accordance with the Council's financial records and audit requirements.		
	Charging	L	The Council is not currently registered for VAT	Existing procedure adequate	
Audit	Annual Return - complete and publish within time limits	L	<p>External Audit Annual Return completed and signed by the Internal Auditor and then completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk / RFO before 30 June and published on the website.</p> <p>If the PC payments and receipts fall below £25,000 the PC may agree that there is no need for a Limited Assurance Review and that Exemption is acceptable; the Certificate of Exemption must be completed and sent to the External Auditor by 30 June. All paperwork must still be completed and published whether or not it is sent to the External Auditor.</p> <p>The PC may still have a Limited Assurance Review and the paperwork must be completed and sent to the External Auditor and published on the website in the usual way.</p>	Existing procedure adequate	RFO, Chairman

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Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
	Public inspection of documents	L	By appointment only, at a convenient public place. For the safety of the Clerk, the public are welcome to inspect documents, but with a Councillor present.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
	Internal Audit	L	Appoint an independent Internal Auditor	Existing procedure adequate	Councillors (with advice from Clerk)
	Review of Effectiveness of Audit	L	The Council must review its requirements of the internal Audit including scope, independence, competence, relationships and planning following the completion of the Internal Audit.	Existing procedure adequate	Council
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved at full Council Meetings, including reference to the power used under the Finance section of Agenda and Finance Report.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Councillors
Election Costs	Risk of an election cost	L	Risk is higher in an election year. In the event of a contested election costs of approx. £3,500 per ward would be required. This amount is advised by SBC Elections Team.	Council to consider provision of reserves to cover at least 1 ward contested election.	Council

Operational Risks

Minutes / agenda / Notices and Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements including publishing on the Agenda and Minutes section of the Parish Council website https://www.seighfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/ Minutes are circulated in advance of the meeting, approved and signed at the next full Council meeting.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
	Standing Orders	L	Re-adopted in November 2025	Reviewed each May	Full Council
	Financial Regulations	L	Re-adopted in July 2025	Reviewed each May	Full Council
	Business conduct	L	Agenda displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chairman.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Chairman
Council Records	Paper	L	Loss through, fire, theft, damage. The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate. To review storage arrangement of council files in the future	Clerk, Full Council
	Electronic	M	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on a laptop held with the Clerk at their home. The data is constantly	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk

			backed up to and a physical backup is taken regularly. Antivirus software to be kept up-to-date		
Data Protection	Policy provision		The Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioner	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
	Data Protection Officer		Is not currently necessary	Review annually	Council
	GDPR		Policies for Data Protection, Document Retention, Freedom of Information, Disclosure Log and Privacy Notice have been adopted and published	Needs updating/ Review annually	Clerk, Full Council
Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations	Policy	L	The Council has a model publication scheme in place.	Needs updating/ Review annually	Clerk, Full Council
	Provision		The Parish Council is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create a number of additional hours work.		Clerk, Full Council
Councillors	Losing a Councillor	L	When a vacancy arises there is a legal process to follow which leads to either a by-election or a co-option process. The more usual is a co-option which starts with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting. The Council tries to draw members from around the Parish to make sure each area is represented.		Clerk, Full Council
	Losing more than six Councillors to make the Council inquorate	M	If there are more than six vacancies at any one time, the Council becomes inquorate and the District Council will take over the running of the Council (at the Village's expense).	Procedures of Stafford Borough Council are adequate.	

Members' Interests and Code of Conduct	Conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest by members at Council meetings. Legally Councillors need only declare 'pecuniary interests', but many choose to declare other interests and withdraw from discussion if necessary. All interests are recorded.	Existing procedure adequate.	Councillors
	Code of Conduct	L	Code issued by SBC and adopted in September 2012. It is issued to each Councillor on election to Office.	Needs updating/ Review annually	
	Register of members' interests	M	Councillors must complete a form on election which must be sent to SBC for publication on their website. Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their own register of members interests is kept up to date.	Review Annually	Councillors
Council Meetings	Recording of meetings	M	Members of the public are requested to inform the Chair if they wish to record the meeting. The Parish Council will also make a recording if necessary.		Chair

Health and Safety

Health and Safety General	Injury to staff, councillors, public or contractors Failure to comply with health and safety legislation	L L	The Council recognises its duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related legislation. Risk assessments are in place for council activities and sites. Public Liability and Employers' Liability insurance transfer the financial risk of claims. Policies adopted, insurance.	Review annually and when activities or sites change. Annually reviewed	Clerk, Full Council
Playgrounds and Equipment Seighford Great Bridgeford Derrington	Injury due to faulty equipment Injury due to misuse or falling Vandalism/damage	M M L	Annual and quarterly independent playground inspections, regular routine visual checks, prompt repairs. Covered under Public Liability insurance. Regular checks, prompt repairs, insurance in place for loss or damage	Annual and quarterly inspections plus routine checks.	Clerk, Councillors
Meetings and Council Activities	Slips, trips and falls, fire risk Injury to members of the public	L L	Meetings held in hired village halls which comply with fire and safety regulations. Emergency exits identified and hazards reported. Public Liability insurance in place.	Regular review and annual	Clerk, Councillors
Employees – Clerk Lone and home working	DSE, Stress, lone working Injury whilst carrying out duties	L	Clerk provided with suitable equipment and support. Contact arrangements in place. Covered under Employers' Liability and Personal Accident insurance held. Risk assessments for site visits.	Annual Review, regular check-in	Full Council, Chair

Contractors	Unsafe working practices Injury to third parties	M L	Contractors must provide risk assessments, method statements and evidence of insurance. Work monitored. Public Liability insurance in place. Contractor insurance checked before work starts.	Review for each contract Annual Review	Clerk, Councillors
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Adopted Date	18 May 2026
Review Period	1 Year
Last Review Date	June 2024
Next Review Date	June 2027