

## **Haddenham Parish Council Risk Assessment 2024-25**

Reviewed 13 May 2024 PC25 13

Haddenham Parish Council aims to provide services for, manage and maintain the assets of Haddenham within the resources provided by the annual precept and other incomes, taking into account the wishes of the residents and obtaining good value for money.

In particular, we will aim to:

1. Ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Councils' Financial regulations, standing orders and code of conduct.
2. Identify and regularly review the council's priorities.
3. Influence other council departments and government organisations to fulfil the requirements of the parish population, for matters that are within our powers and responsibilities.
4. Ensure that all councillors are aware of their responsibilities and possible liabilities and to provide adequate insurance cover for all identifiable risks.
5. Keep appropriate books of account accurately and up to date throughout the financial year.
6. Ensure that payments made from council funds and the use of assets represent good value for money, are adequately managed and comply generally with the wishes of residents.
7. Ensure that the annual precept requirement results from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget is regularly monitored; and reserves are appropriate.
8. Explore all possible sources of income and ensure that expected income is fully received.
9. Ensure that salaries paid to employees and amounts paid to contractors are paid in accordance with council regulations and adequately monitored.
10. Ensure that year end accounts are prepared on the correct accounting basis, on time and supported by an adequate audit trail.
11. Identify, value and maintain all the assets of the Parish Council and ensure that asset and investment registers are complete accurate and properly maintained
12. Comply with appropriate Government and European legislation including Equality Act 2010 (disability, racial and ethnic equality etc), Children Act 1989 (safe guarding children etc) and relevant Health and Safety Act 1974 etc
13. Carry out adequate safety checks on all buildings, properties, and equipment for which the council is responsible.

The following risks have been identified which may prevent the Parish Council from meeting its aims. The mitigating actions will help to reduce these risks.

## **Financial**

### **Precept and Budgeting**

**Identified Risk:** Adequacy of precept

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

#### **Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- A 10- year forward plan for the maintenance of the Council's assets is prepared to ensure the cost of maintenance is spread evenly.
- Reserves are set aside where larger items of expenditure that can be anticipated can be prepared for and costs evened out across years.
- A detailed finance report is prepared for the Council after the second quarter of the current year with full year projections and prior year actual budget figures.
- Through the Finance and General Purposes Committee, carry out a zero-based budget setting process prior to setting the precept.
- Each committee reviews current year spending against individual budgets for standard costs and estimates the cost of new projects or responsibilities.
- After reviewing the information circulated ahead of the meeting the precept is set by a majority resolution at a meeting of the full council and recorded in the minutes.

**Review at May 2024** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Precept request not received by the Unitary Council

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Low

#### **Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The Clerk will include the budgeting setting process on the agenda for the F&GP Committee in the Autumn meeting with a view to presenting a proposal to full council in January to meet Unitary deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January..
- The precept request will be emailed to the Unitary Council the day after the meeting and a read receipt requested. If no acknowledgement is received a follow-up telephone call will be made to confirm receipt.
- When each of the 2 precept payments are received, the Clerk will notify the Council.

**Review at May 2024 :** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Unanticipated expenditure

**Likelihood:** 3

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Unanticipated expenditure is minimised by the practice of always considering the financial impact of changes in regulations or responsibilities / new initiatives and of events (both amount and timing) and setting aside earmarked reserves when appropriate to meet these costs.
- The budgeting process will set aside reserves for repairs or replacements of the Council's assets over the life expectancy of the asset.
- A general contingency of 50% of operational costs will be held for emergency use.
- If necessary, a review of budgets will be carried out during the year to fund unbudgeted expenditure from unutilised budgets.

**Review at May -2024** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Best Value

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 1

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The finance regulations are annually reviewed to ensure robust processes for obtaining quotes and spending limits are in place. Any amendment to procurement law during the financial year will be resolved at the next FGP / Full Council meeting and incorporated into the Parish Councils Financial Regulations as appropriate.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

## **Accounting**

**Identified Risk:** Incomplete Records Kept

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- RFO will be trained in proper accounting practices.
- RFO will be trained on RBS accounting package.
- The latest edition of Governance and Accountability for Smaller Councils will be available.
- The Council has Finance Regulations which are updated in accordance with NALC recommendations.
- Internal Controls policy

**Review at May 2024:** Internal controls reviewed and updated.

**Identified Risk:** Incorrect payments against invoices. Invoices not paid.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- A system of internal control is in place and annually reviewed at Finance and General Purpose Meeting..
- The council receives a monthly list of payments and the Finance and General Purposes committee monitors the Internal Control measures.

**Review at May 2024:** Internal controls reviewed and updated.

### **Banking**

**Identified Risk:** Mistakes made or Fraudulent activity

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The system of internal controls in place and annually reviewed by Finance and General Purposes Committee..
- Bank reconciliations presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee quarterly.

**Review at May 2024:** Internal controls reviewed and updated.

### **Reporting**

**Identified Risk:** Mistakes made or Fraudulent activity

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The system of internal controls in place
- Bank reconciliations presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee quarterly

**Review at May 2024 :** Existing procedures adequate

### **Auditing**

**Identified Risk:** No independent check

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The Council appoints an internal auditor to review the accounts twice a year and action any recommendations...
- The council has the annual return externally audited.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

### **Powers**

**Identified Risk:** Expenditure that is not within the council's powers.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Councillor and staff training on powers and duties of parish councils.
- The Clerk will advise council if it is acting outside of its powers.
- The cashbook includes a s137 expenditure record
- Use the Power of General Competence if appropriate.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

### **Approval**

**Identified Risk:** Expenditure that has not gone through the proper approval process.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The internal control system includes an approval process.
- Invoices are checked against recorded decisions.

**Review at May 2024:** Internal controls reviewed and updated.

### **Cash**

**Identified Risk:** Loss / theft of petty cash

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 1

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council does not maintain a petty cash book.
- Payments received by cash are held in a locked fire-proof safe and banked (with confirmation of transaction) as soon as possible after receipt.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

## **VAT**

**Identified Risk:** Failure to correctly account for VAT. Failure to reclaim.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The Council's internal control system includes measures to manage this risk
- RBS accounting package provides quarterly VAT returns.

**Review at May 2024:** Internal controls reviewed and updated.

## **Assets**

**Identified Risk:** Loss or damage. 3rd party damage or injury.

**Likelihood:** 3

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- All assets are identified and located
- An up-to-date asset register will be kept by the Clerk.
- Assets are safely and securely stored.
- Routine inspection and maintenance schedules for all assets.
- Assets have a purchased and insurance value.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

## **Insurance**

**Identified Risk:** Inadequate insurance

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council will annually review its insurance cover in consideration of its assets and activities.
- Ensure any additional assets obtained through the financial year are adequately insured.
- Use of Council's assets by others will be properly monitored, risk assessed and insured.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

## **Personnel**

**Identified Risk:** Loss of key staff

**Likelihood:** 4

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Adequate notice period within employment contracts
- Staffing contingency budget to provide temporary cover

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Unprofessional behaviour. Fraud.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Disciplinary and misconduct procedures in place and are regularly reviewed.
- Internal control policy should pick up any fraud.
- Insurance cover in place

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Inadequate performance

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Regular performance reviews carried out
- Training opportunities taken up
- Membership of SLCC for professional advice and training
- Membership of BMKALC for professional advice and training
- CiLCA qualification for Clerks

**Review at May 2024:** Appraisals of staff completed annually. Objectives set. New roles and responsibilities identified and actioned.

**Identified Risk:** Failure to pay salaries or incorrect payments made

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Professional payroll company used
- Payments made by bank transfer.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate.

**Identified Risk:** Failure to comply with pension provision regulations

**Likelihood:** 1

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The Council has carried out an assessment of pension providers and signed up with a provider.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate.

**Identified Risk:** Provision of adequate office and meeting space. Storage and indoor workspace for office staff.

**Likelihood:** 4

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council provides a parish office and combined meeting room
- The Parish Council has increased its office space for staff with an additional office space at the Airfield Pavilion in May 2023
- Adequate office space provision is reviewed each time a new office-based employee is recruited.

**Review at May 2024** No action needed.

**Identified Risk:** Provision of adequate office and meeting space. Storage and indoor workspace for grounds staff.

**Likelihood:** 4

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The parish council provides a workshop which provides all the necessary facilities..

**Review at May 2024 :** No action needed

**Identified Risk:** COVID -19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood:** 5

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** High

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government legislation
- Specific risk assessments carried out
- Office closed
- Staff working from home

- Meetings held virtually

**Review at May 2024:** Be informed of any govt restrictions. All office-based staff have adequate IT & office equipment to work at home.

**Identified Risk:** Provision of adequate equipment to carry out job.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Any office based parish staff are equipped with furniture and computers which meet latest government health and safety guidelines.
- Any grounds maintenance staff will be provided with the necessary equipment to undertake their jobs safely.

**Review at May2024 :** No action necessary

**Identified Risk:** Failure to meet appropriate health and safety requirements for the workplace

**Likelihood:** 4

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- •The council will ensure work place activities are properly risk assessed and risks mitigated.
- •Identification of training needs and appropriate courses.
- •Requirement for risk assessment and training to be carried out prior to carrying out tasks.
- •Ensure all contractors have proper risk assessments and insurance in place.

**Review at May 2024:** Policies in place and reviewed.

## **Councillors and Meetings**

**Identified Risk:** COVID -19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood:** 5

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** High

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government legislation.
- Meetings held virtually
- All Councillors have access to a tablet to use for meetings should they need it.

**Review at May 2024** Policies in place and reviewed.

**Identified Risk:** Poor conduct

**Likelihood:** 3

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council has adopted the recommended Code of Conduct which is given to all new councillors.
- The Council has adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge in 2022

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Ultra-vires decisions

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- All councillors will attend a councillor training course
- The Chair of the meeting will guide decisions.
- All decisions adhere to Council's Standing Orders.
- A proper officer of the council will be present at meetings to advise.
- All new / updated legal advice will be circulated to councillors.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Failure to comply with standing orders

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The standing orders will be reviewed annually and will be available at all meetings for reference.
- The chair of the meeting will be responsible for ensuring compliance with standing orders.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Resignation of councillors leaves the council inquorate

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Maintaining a good working relationship within the council through strong leadership and ethos.
- Good communication and involvement in the local community

- Proactively co-opt new member(s) following resignation(s)

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Lack of an appropriate meeting place. Inadequacy of meeting facilities.

**Likelihood:** 4

**Impact:** 3

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council manages a dedicated community meeting room that is used for Council meetings.
- The Council has a new function room in the Airfield Pavilion which can be used for Council meetings.
- Small meeting room in the parish office for informal meetings.
- Screen and sound system for presentations and hybrid meetings.
- Adequate sound system for public inclusion at meetings

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Inability to carry out the business of the council due to unpredicted circumstances.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** High

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council will need to adopt business continuity policy

**Review at May 2024:** New policy to be brought forward for review at next Finance and General Purposes Meeting

**Identified Risk:** Poor record keeping of meetings

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The decisions made at meetings will be recorded in the minutes by the Clerk. The minutes will be circulated and reviewed for accuracy before being -resolved at the following meeting.
- Clerks and office staff will be trained in the proper recording of council minutes

**Review at May 2024** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Loss of hard copies of documentation due to fire / theft etc.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Legal documents are held in a fireproof safe.
- All new legal documents are automatically stored electronically and older documents scanned.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Electronic data.

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- All data is stored via using Microshade IT (Cloud) and storage is at a secure off site data centre.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

**Identified Risk:** Lack of policies leads to poor decision making

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 5

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Where necessary the council will prepare policy documents to guide its decisions and ensure proper governance.
- Policies will be regularly reviewed to ensure they comply with any relevant legislation or recommended practices.

**Review at May 2024:** Existing procedures adequate

## **Communication**

**Identified Risk:** Poor internal and external communication has a detrimental effect on council business. Inaccurate and malevolent posting on social media. Denial of service attack.

**Likelihood:** 3

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Medium

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- The council will maintain a communications policy to guide councillors and staff on effective communication.
- A communications strategy will be in place.
- Social media will be monitored as far as is reasonable.

- Where the level of enquiries made to the Council are determined as vexatious, a limit on the time spent dealing with responses will be set.
- Adherence to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Review at May 2024:** Communications Policy in place. The Council employs a member of staff with specific responsibility for communications.

## **Charities**

**Identified Risk:** Poor governance

**Likelihood:** 2

**Impact:** 4

**Risk level:** Low

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Ensure the business transacted on behalf of the charity is separate from the council business.
- Ensure all finances are separated.
- Ensure all councillors are aware of their responsibilities as trustees
- Ensure charity funds are spent in line with the charity's scheme

**Review at May 2024:** The Council, and the trustees of Banks Park Recreational Charity, Education Charity and Parochial Charities have agreed to an amalgamation of all Charities to form a new Charity CIO. An Expert solicitor has been engaged to work with all the relevant stakeholders with the aim to submit a proposal to Charity Commission for approval.

## **Covid-19 or other air-borne infection**

### **Councillors**

**Identified Risk:** Spread of Covid-19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood:** 3

**Impact:** 6

**Risk level:** High

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government guidance
- Office closed to walk-in visitors
- Meetings held virtually
- Social distancing for essential contact

**Review at May 2024:** Constant review of govt restrictions. All staff have adequate IT & office equipment to work at home.

### **Office staff**

**Identified Risk:** Spread of Covid-19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood: 3**

**Impact: 6**

**Risk level: High**

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government guidance
- Office closed and risk assessment for essential office working.
- Staff working from home
- Meetings held virtually
- Provision of adequate PPE

**Review at May 2024:** Constant review of govt restrictions. All staff have adequate IT & office equipment to work at home.

### **Contractors working on behalf the parish**

**Identified Risk:** Spread of Covid-19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood: 3**

**Impact: 6**

**Risk level: High**

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Ensure latest government guidance is adhered to.
- COVID-19 Risk Assessments undertaken
- Social distancing adhered too
- Provision of adequate PPE.

**Review at May 2024:** Constant review to ensure latest govt guidance is adhered to.

### **Members of the public**

**Identified Risk:** Spread of Covid-19 or other air-borne infection

**Likelihood: 3**

**Impact: 6**

**Risk level: High**

**Measures taken to minimise risk:**

- Council office closed to walk in visitors
- All meetings are virtual only
- Provide advice to residents on latest govt guidelines through use of website / newsletter/social media.
- Organisation of Help Line for vulnerable / shielding parishioners.

**Review at May 2024:** Constant review to ensure any measures taken are relevant to latest central govt guidance.

## **Key**

**Likelihood (a)**

Certain = 5

Probable = 4

Even Chance = 3

Possible = 2

Unlikely = 1

**Impact (b)**

Very High = 6

High = 5

Medium = 4

Low = 3

Very low = 1

**Magnitude (a**x**b)**

High risk = 21-30

Medium risk = 11-20

Low risk = 2-10