

Haddenham Parish Council Risk Assessment

2020 - 2021



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 and the Council's Financial Regulations 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 the Equality Act 2010 (disability, racial and ethnic equality etc), the Children Act 1989 (safe guarding children etc) and relevant Health and Safety Acts 1974 etc

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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.

Risk Area	Identified Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk level H/M/L	Measures taken to minimise risk	Review March 2021	Actions required
	Financial						
Precept and Budgeting	Adequacy of precept	1	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forward plan for the maintenance of the Council's assets is prepared, with appropriate timescales dependant on the nature of the asset, 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, 	Existing procedures adequate	

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					<p>carry out a zero-based budget setting process prior to setting the precept.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		
	Precept request not received by the Unitary Council	1	5	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk will include the budgeting setting process on the agenda for the F&GP Committee in October with a view to presenting a proposal to Full Council in December or January. • The precept request will be emailed to the Unitary Council the day after the meeting and a read receipt requested. 		

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When each of the 2 precept payments are received, the Clerk will notify the Council. 		
	Unanticipated expenditure	3	4	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Existing procedures adequate	

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	Best value	1	1	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Finance Regulations include processes for obtaining quotes and spending limits. 		
Accounting							
	Incomplete records kept	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RFO will be trained in proper accounting practices. The 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 	Annual review	Internal controls reviewed and updated.
	Incorrect payments against invoices. Invoices not paid.	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council to have a system of internal controls in place. The Council receives a monthly list of payments 	Annual Review	Clerk updated internal controls
Banking							

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	Mistakes made or Fraudulent activity	1	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council to have a system of internal controls in place. Bank reconciliations presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee monthly. 	Annual Review	Clerk to update internal controls
Reporting	Poor communication	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a system of quarterly reporting that includes bank reconciliation, income and expenditure and spending against budget. 	Existing procedures adequate	
Auditing	No independent check	1	5	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council appoints an internal auditor to annually review the accounts. The Council has the annual return externally audited. 	Existing procedures adequate	
Powers	Expenditure that is not within the Council's powers.	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor and staff training on powers and duties of parish councils. The Clerk will advise the Council if it is acting outside of its powers. The cashbook includes a s137 expenditure record Use of the Power of General Competence if appropriate. 	Existing procedures adequate	

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Approval	Expenditure that has not gone through the proper approval process.	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal control system includes an approval process. Invoices are checked against recorded decisions. 	Annual Review	Clerk to update internal controls
Cash	Loss / theft of petty cash	1	1	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council does not maintain a petty cash book. Payments received by cash are held in a locked fire-proof safe and banked as soon as possible after receipt. 	Existing procedures adequate	
VAT	Failure to correctly account for VAT Failure to reclaim	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's internal control system includes measures to manage this risk RBS accounting package provides quarterly VAT returns. 	ANNUAL REVIEW	Clerk updated internal controls
Assets							
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or damage 3rd party damage or injury 	3	4	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All assets are identified and located An up to date asset register will be kept by the Clerk. Assets are safely and securely stored. 		

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine inspection and maintenance schedules for all assets. Assets are marked as having a purchase and insurance value. 		
Insurance							
	Inadequate insurance	2	5	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will annually review its insurance cover in consideration of its assets and activities. Use of Council's assets by others will be properly monitored, risk assessed and insured. 		
Personnel							
	Loss of key staff	4	5	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing contingency budget to provide temporary cover 		
	Unprofessional behaviour Fraud	2	5	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disciplinary and misconduct procedures in place Internal control policy should pick up any fraud. Insurance cover in place 	Updated Disciplinary policies.	Continue to review as per policy review document.
	Inadequate performance	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular performance reviews to be carried out 	Appraisals of staff completed	

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities to be taken up • Membership of SLCC for professional advice and training • Membership of MKBALC for professional advice and training • CiLCA qualification for Clerks 	November 2020. Objectives set. New roles and responsibilities identified and actioned.	
	Failure to pay salaries or incorrect payments made	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional payroll company used • Payments made by bank transfer. 	Existing procedures adequate	
	Failure to comply with pension provision regulations	1	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has carried out an assessment of pension providers and signed up with a provider. 	Existing procedure are adequate	
	Provision of adequate office and meeting space. Storage and indoor workspace for ground staff	4	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council provides a parish office and combined meeting room • The Council provides a workshop. 	New office is due for completion	New office refurbishment completed March 21.

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C	Covid -19 infection	5	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government legislation Office closed Staff working from home Meetings held virtually 	Constant review of govt restrictions. All staff adequate IT & office equipment to work at home	New IT / office furniture purchased. Compliance with legislation whilst continuing a service to parishioners.
	Provision of adequate equipment to carry out job.	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish office is equipped with furniture and computers The workshop is equipped with a tractor and various tools. 	New meeting area in refurbished office for use after CV-19 restrictions eased.	New office refurbishment completed March 2021.
	Failure to meet appropriate health and safety requirements for the workplace	4	6	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	New Training Policy Health and Safety policy reviewed. Annual check that all contractors' insurance policies are valid. Annual check of risk assessments.	Policies in place and reviewed.
Councillors and Meetings							

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	Covid -19 infection	5	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government legislation. Meetings held virtually 	Constant review of govt restrictions. All Councillors have adequate IT to attend virtual meetings	Ensure all Councillors have access to a tablet to use for meetings should they need it.
	Poor conduct	3	4	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has adopted the recommended Code of Conduct which is given to all new councillors. 	Existing procedures adequate	Note – new Model of Code of Conduct is currently being reviewed by central govt. Keep Councillors updated.
	Ultra-vires decisions	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All councillors will attend a councillor training course The Chair of the meeting will guide decisions. A proper officer of the Council will be present at meetings to advise. All new / updated legal advice will be circulated to councillors. 	Existing procedures adequate	Encourage ongoing training for current and new Councillors.
	Failure to comply with standing orders	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standing orders will be reviewed annually and will be available at all meetings for reference. 	Existing procedures adequate	

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the meeting will be responsible for ensuring compliance with standing orders. 		
	Resignation of councillors leaves the council inquorate	2	6	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 	Existing procedures adequate	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of an appropriate meeting place. Inadequacy of meeting facilities 	4	3	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council hires a meeting room at the village hall including chairs and tables Meeting table and chairs in the parish office for committee and informal meetings Projector and screen for presentations at meetings. Adequate sound system for public inclusion at meetings 	Due to Covid-19 there hasn't been any face to face council meetings since 23/03/20. New office refurbishment completed March 2021.	Ensure all furniture and audio visual equipment is installed for when in-house meetings can take place again.
Record Keeping and Policies							

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	Inability to carry out the business of the Council due to unpredicted circumstances.	2	6	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council will keep an up to date business continuity policy 	No policy in place	Deputy Clerk to research other parishes' policies and draft for HPC
	Poor record keeping of meetings	2	3	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 agreed at the following meeting. Clerks will be trained in the proper recording of council minutes 	Existing procedures adequate	
	Loss of hard copies of documentation due to fire / theft etc.	2	6	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal documents are held in a fireproof safe. All new legal documents are automatically stored electronically and older documents scanned. 	Existing procedures adequate	
	Electronic data	2	6	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All data is stored via using Microshade IT (Cloud) and storage at a secure off-site data centre. 	Existing procedures adequate	

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	Lack of policies leads to poor decision making	2	5	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Existing procedures adequate	
Communication							
	<p>Poor internal and external communication has a detrimental effect on Council business</p> <p>Inaccurate and malevolent posting on social media</p> <p>Denial of service attack</p>	3	4	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communications committee to be responsible for overseeing the Council's communications. 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 become vexatious, a limit on the time 	Communications Policy in place	Review

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					spent dealing with responses will be set.		
Charitable Trusts							
	Poor governance	2	4	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the business transacted on behalf of the Trust is separate from the Council business. • Ensure all finances are separated. • Ensure all councillors are aware of their responsibilities as trustees • Ensure trust funds are spent in line with the trust scheme 	Educational charity current account needed.	Need to complete separation of finances.
Covid-19							
Councillors	Covid-19 infection Spread of Covid-19	3	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government advice • Office closed • Staff working from home • Meetings held virtually 	Constant review of govt restrictions. All staff adequate IT & office equipment to work at home	New IT / office furniture purchased. Compliance with legislation whilst continuing a service to parishioners.
Office Staff	Covid -19 infection	3	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond quickly and appropriately to latest government 	Constant review of govt restrictions.	New IT / office furniture purchased.

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	Spread of Covid-19				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office closed Staff working from home Meetings held virtually Provision of adequate PPE 	All staff adequate IT & office equipment to work at home	Compliance with legislation whilst continuing a service to parishioners.
Contractors working on behalf the parish.	Covid-19 infection Spread of Covid-19	3	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure latest government guidance is adhered to. Covid Risk Assessments undertaken. Social distancing adhered to. Provision of adequate PPE. 	Constant review to ensure latest govt guidance is adhered too.	Constant review
Members of the Public	Covid-19 infection Spread of Covid-19	3	6	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council office closed All meetings are virtual only Provide advice to electorate on latest govt guidelines through use of website / newsletter. Organisation of Help Line for vulnerable / shielding parishioners. 	Constant review to ensure measures taken are still relevant to central govt guidance	Constant review

Likelihood (a)		Impact (b)		Magnitude (a x b)
Certain	5	Very High	6	

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Probable	4	High	5	
Even Chance	3	Medium	4	High Risk = 21-30
Possible	2	Low	3	Medium Risk = 11- 20
Unlikely	1	Very Low	1	Low Risk = 2-10