

GARVESTONE, REYMERSTON & THUXTON PARISH COUNCIL
GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT
reviewed by the Council on March 2025

	Aim	Risk	Method used to Minimise Risk
1	To ensure all business activities are within legal powers applicable to parish councils.	1. Lack of knowledge of regulations and codes. 2. Absence of Standing Orders 3. Actions by the PC outside its powers laid down by Parliament. 4. Items purchased without proper tendering procedures, resulting in accusations of commercial favouritism. 5. Payments made without prior approval and adequate control. 6. Lack of control of signatories to cheques. 7. VAT not properly accounted for, resulting in overclaims and large demands from HMRC.	Ensure that all councillors have copies of relevant Acts, Code of Conduct, and Standing Orders. Highlight essential parts and provide training where possible. Ensure that Standing Orders are produced, understood by councillors, and reviewed every two years. As 1.1, but ensure that powers are highlighted or extracted into effective summary. Ensure that all councillors are aware of regulations re estimates and full tender procedures (see Financial Regulations). Ensure all payments are approved in Council meetings and recorded in minutes. Keep cash payments to a minimum, and avoid if possible. Keep authorised signatories to a minimum consistent with practicalities. Ensure appropriate publications held and that clerk has good knowledge of regulations.
2	To influence other council departments and government organisations to fulfil the requirements of the parish population.	1. Lack of effective lines of communication with other organisations. 2. Lack of effective lines of communication with parishioners. 3. Lack of preparation on subjects requiring influence. 4. Lack of confidence by councillors.	Note all communication lines which are essential or beneficial and make information available to all councillors. Establish contacts by name and where possible face-to-face. Take every opportunity to publicise role of Council. Use Group News, notice boards and fliers. Use key issues to raise profile of PC and to test parishioners' views. Add social event to occasional meeting. Ensure that all councillors are aware of need for careful research and are guided as to where to obtain relevant information on issues under discussion. As 2.1. Experienced councillors to assist newcomers to establish essential contacts. Delegate responsibility for specific contacts to individual councillors.

3	To ensure that all councillors are aware of their responsibilities, and possible liabilities, and to provide adequate insurance cover for all possible risks.	1. Lack of knowledge of possible culpability of councillors. 2. Lack of education of councillors regarding culpability. 3. Inadequate insurance cover taken out.	Regular scrutiny of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and familiarisation with those where greatest risk occurs. As 3.1. Delegate responsibility to one or two councillors to assist newcomers to understand culpability. Attend any training courses available. Review risk assessment at meetings at least yearly. Ensure adequate cover and review regularly.
4	To identify, record and protect the Council's physical assets.	1. Lack of knowledge of assets of Council. 2. Lack of annual inspection and maintenance. 3. Insurer and insurance cover inadequate.	Ascertain and record all assets for which the Council is responsible and review annually. Ensure all assets are inspected annually. Ensure adequate insurance when cover is renewed.
5	Risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the Council providing services or amenities to the public (public liability)	1. Inadequate cover	Ensure adequate insurance when cover is renewed.
6	Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability)	1. Lack of information on assets and equipment. 2. Lack of knowledge of safety requirements. 3. Lack of commitment to carrying out safety checks.	Include in asset register all assets for which Council is responsible. Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by clerk. Place subject as item on meeting agenda at regular intervals. As 6.2. Delegate responsibility for particular assets to individual councillors or the clerk.
7	To keep appropriate books of account accurately and up-to-date through out the financial year.	1. Lack of knowledge of accounting requirements. 2. Lack of commitment to accounting requirements. 3. Inaccuracies in recording amounts and totals in books of account, and bank reconciliations. 4. Payments missed or delayed due to inadequate filing of invoices.	Ensure that all councillors are familiar with current financial regulations and include them in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Regularly review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Clerk to produce financial reports at quarterly meetings. Internal audit to be undertaken at the end of the financial year. Internal audit reports to be made available to all councillors and any recommendations to be acted upon promptly. Clerk to ensure that books of account are formatted in such a way that internal controls are included and activated. Keep number of accounts to a minimum but ensure that any large credit balances are deposited in an interest bearing account.

		5. Clerk taken ill or leaves without replacement	Avoid cash payments and receipts if possible. Where cash payments and receipts are unavoidable use a properly controlled petty cash account with a set maximum balance. Use of one of a pool of local clerks.
8	To ensure that payments made from Council funds and the use of assets, represent value for money, are adequately managed, and comply generally with the wishes of the residents.	1. Lack of knowledge of wishes of residents. 2. Use of funds not giving value for money 3. Use of funds not in accordance with the wishes of the residents 4. Fund raising not properly controlled or not in accordance with regulations.	As 2.2. Ensure residents are consulted on all major financial issues. Effective budget planning processes. As 2.2. Appointment of RFO (clerk) to create effective financial management. All councillors to be aware of need to check regulations before commencing fund-raising activities. Effective financial management by clerk.
9	To ensure that the annual precept requirement results from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget is regularly monitored; and reserves are appropriate.	1. Lack of knowledge of budgetary process, and Council regulations. 2. Lack of commitment to budgetary process. 3. Inadequate consideration of requirements for annual precept. 4. Calculation not in accordance with Council regulations. 5. Inadequate internal controls with regard to monitoring expenditure. 6. Reserves too low.	Include regulations in Standing Orders issued to all councillors. Place item on agenda early in year to remind councillors of budget process and actions required. As 1.1. Involve all councillors in budgetary process not solely the clerk. As 1.1. Start consideration of calculation at least 3 months prior to submission date. Checks by clerk and Internal Auditor. Checks by clerk and Internal Auditor. Financial and budget progress reports to quarterly PC meetings. As 9.5.
10	To ensure that salaries paid to employees and amounts paid to contractors are paid in accordance with Council regulations, and adequately monitored.	1. Inappropriate rate of pay to employees. 2. Tax and NI arrangements not in accordance with regulations. 3. Amounts paid to contractors not in accordance with contract and inadequately monitored.	Ensure employee regulations are available and understood by clerk. Internal audit checks. As 10.1. Clerk to monitor contract work carried out.
11	To ensure that year end accounts are prepared on the correct accounting basis, on time, and supported by an adequate audit trail.	1. Lack of knowledge of Council regulations and procedures. 2. Late or non-submission of annual accounts. 3. Year end accounts not prepared, inaccurate, or	Clerk and councillors familiar with Financial Regulations. Attend training. Clerk to report progress to Council meetings. Internal Auditor checks. Internal Auditor checks.

		not in accordance with Council requirements. 4. Inadequate audit trail from records to final accounts.	Internal Auditor checks.
12	To identify, value, and maintain all the assets of the Council, and ensure that asset and investment registers are complete, accurate and properly maintained.	1. Lack of knowledge of assets of Council. 2. Assets lost or misappropriated 3. Inadequate or inaccurate valuation of the council's assets. 4. Asset register not established or inadequately maintained.	Ascertain and record all assets for which Council is responsible. Maintain a permanent asset register. Establish who is responsible for security and maintenance of each asset. Clerk to monitor location and use of assets. Arrange for periodic review of valuations and arrange for professional valuation where necessary. Create asset register in accordance with Audit Commission requirements.
13	To comply with appropriate Government legislation regarding disability, racial equality, safeguarding children etc.	1. Lack of knowledge of applicable legislation 2. Lack of public awareness of applicable legislation. 3. Failure to comply with applicable legislation.	Clerk to have all appropriate legislation available. Review liabilities and responsibilities periodically at Council meetings. Include, as appropriate, in any public consultations. As 13.1.
14	To carry out adequate safety checks on all buildings, properties, and equipment for which the Council is responsible.	1. Lack of information on properties, buildings and equipment. 2. Lack of knowledge of safety requirements. 3. Lack of commitment to carrying out safety checks.	Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by clerk. Include in asset register all properties for which PC responsible. Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by clerk. Place subject as item on PC meeting agenda at regular intervals. As 15.2. Delegate responsibility for particular assets to individual councillors or clerk.
15	To ensure computer security for Council's records.	1. Inadequate safeguards to prevent viruses and other intrusions damaging Council documents. 2. Lack of document back-up. 3. Lack of awareness of Data Protection Act.	Ensure regular anti-virus protection of clerk's computer. Ensure monthly back-up of all Council documents to memory stick. Adequate training to facilitate implementation of Act.
16	To ensure the PC is adhering to data protection law.	1. PC fails to adhere to data protection rules – complaints received due to a data protection breach/complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office	Data protection policy adopted and information audit regularly reviewed.