

# Coffinswell Parish Council

Serving the Communities of

Coffinswell & Dacombe

The Gull Bunting is the UK's rarest farmland bird. The entire breeding population is found between Exeter and Plymouth.



## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

**2025 - 2026**

**(Reviewed May 2025)**

### **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Coffinswell Parish Council is committed to identifying and managing risks, using the following procedures, and to ensuring that risks are maintained at an acceptable level. Any action that is felt necessary will be taken up by Coffinswell Parish Council.

The Parish Councillors will review risks at a minimum yearly, including any newly identified risks. The review will include identification of unacceptable levels of risk.

The approach to local council audit requires councils to provide an assessment of the ways in which business and other risks are managed in order that corporate governance arrangements are strengthened, stewardship of public funds are improved, and assurance provided to taxpayers. The failure to manage risk effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation as well as an impediment to the achievement of the desired aims of the Council.

The Local Councils Governance and Accountability Guidance makes the following observations regarding risk management.

1. Risk management is not just about financial management; it is about setting objectives and achieving them in order to deliver high quality public services.
2. The new approach places emphasis on local councils strengthening their own corporate governance arrangements, improving the stewardship of public funds and providing assurances to taxpayers.

It goes on to state that members of the Parish Council are ultimately responsible for risk management because risk threatens the achievement of objectives. Coffinswell Parish Council is well placed to undertake this as many features of risk management are already well established and are effectively part of the day-to-day operations undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council by the Chair, the Clerk and the RFO. The Government's requirement for the preparation of a formal document outlining a Council's assessment of its risk management process does afford the opportunity to adapt, improve and document existing processes. Members of the Parish Council should, therefore: -

- a) Take steps to identify key risks facing the Council.
- b) Evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place.
- c) Decided upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce, or control the risk or its consequences.

## **COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – MAY 2025**

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what the risk may be.
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review, assess and revise if required.

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to unexpected or tragic circumstances.	L	All files and recent records are kept at the clerk's home. Computer back up of files taken whenever computer switched on via OneDrive, also periodic back up on external hard drive. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed, the Chairman holds the details of all passwords and login details and will contact DALC for a list of locum clerks.	Review when necessary.
Council Records	Loss through theft, fire, damage	L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk.  Records include historical correspondence, minute books and insurance and accounts documents	Loss through theft or damage is unlikely.  Existing procedures adequate
Council Records Electronic	Loss through theft, fire, damage, or corruption of computer	L	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the clerk's computer which is kept at home. Back-ups are done via OneDrive whenever the computer is switched on and periodic back-up on external hard drive.	Adequate risk control in place.

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Website	Parish Clerk not being able to function.  Loss of passwords	L	Parish Council's website is hosted and serviced by TEEC Limited  Parish Clerk is able to maintain website.  Website access password kept by Parish Clerk and website host.	Existing procedures adequate
Meeting Location	Adequacy    Health & Safety	L	Meetings are held either in the Church or Vestry. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, councillors and any Public who attend from a health and safety and comfort aspect. The Parochial Church Council annually make a Health & Safety review	Existing location is adequate.

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	<p>Sound budgeting to underline annual precept. The Parish Council receives monthly banking information, quarterly budget updates, and a detailed budget in the autumn. The precept is an agenda item for December.</p> <p>The amount requested is based on actual spending and estimated expenditure for the ensuing year.</p> <p>The RFO submits precept written request to Teignbridge District Council and informs the Council when monies are received via Budget update report.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
Banking	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for internet banking, cheques, and reconciliation of accounts. Accounts are annually reviewed by internal and external audit.	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations as necessary.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has no petty cash or float. Any cash transactions made by the Clerk, are fully receipted, and then reimbursed quarterly by internet bank transfer or cheque.	Existing procedure adequate.

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Financial controls and records	Inadequate checks	L	<p>Monthly reconciliations prepared by the Clerk and checked at the Council meeting.</p> <p>Two out of four signatories are required per cheque. Two out of four to agree internet banking payments.</p> <p>Internal and external audit. Any financial obligation must be resolved and clearly minuted before any commitment. All payments must be resolved and clearly minuted. Any S137 payments must be recorded at the time of approval.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
Direct costs and Overhead expenses  Debt	<p>Incorrect invoicing</p> <p>Cheques/BACS incorrect</p> <p>Debts outstanding</p>	L	<p>All payments to be approved by Councillors at a meeting and all invoices to be checked. All payments must be clearly minuted. Two authorised signatories are required to sign cheques or authorise BACS payments.</p> <p>The Council does not allow debt</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Review the Financial Regulations annually.</p>

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Remuneration and other costs	Remuneration calculated and paid incorrectly.  Tax and NI implications	L	The Parish Council has one regular employee, the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk's remuneration is reviewed annually and is based on industry remuneration scales. Payments are calculated by Lee Accounting (South West) Limited and are approved at the Council meeting.  Tax and NI matters are dealt with by Lee Accounting (South West) Limited and the Clerk.	Existing procedures adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy  Cost  Compliance  Fidelity guarantee	L  L  L  L	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements in place. Employer's liability, public liability and fidelity guarantee are statutory requirements.  Current levels as per the insurance schedule	Existing procedures adequate  Review provision and compliance.  Annually
Data Protection	Policy and provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency (ICO)	Registration to be renewed annually



## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L	<p>The Council has a model publication scheme for local councils in place.</p> <p>The Council can request a fee if the work required to provide information would cost over £450 in labour and costs.</p> <p>The Clerk will monitor and report the impact of any requests made. The Council has not received any requests for information to date.</p>	Monitor and report any impacts made under Freedom of Information Act.
VAT	Failure to maintain proper records and to reclaim VAT where appropriate	L	The Parish Council has controls and procedures in place to ensure that VAT is reclaimed as appropriate. VAT claims are undertaken annually.	Existing procedures adequate
Annual Return	Failure to submit within time limits	L	Annual return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing, then checked and (if applicable) sent to the External Auditor within the time limit	Existing procedures adequate

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Election Costs	Risk of Election cost	M	Risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of a contested election. A contingency fund should be established to meet the possible costs, particularly in the election year.	Include in budget when setting precept.
Clerk	Loss of Clerk  Fraud  Actions	M  L  L	A fund should be established to enable any future clerk to be trained for the clerk's qualification. The requirements of fidelity insurance guarantee must be adhered to. Clerk should be provided with any relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice.	Include in financial budget when setting precept.  Membership of DALC maintained.  Monitor working conditions.  Membership of CiLCA recommended
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Maintenance of Parish Council assets	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks are made on all benches and equipment by members of the Parish Council	Existing procedures adequate

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Notice Boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council has two notice boards sited around the parish. Both locations have approval by relevant parties and are inspected regularly by the Clerk and Councillors – any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Keys are held by the Parish Clerk and Chairman.	Existing procedures adequate.
<b>LIABILITY</b>				
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments  Working parties taking decisions	L  M	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and clearly minuted.  No working parties exist within the Parish Council	Existing procedures adequate
Minutes  Agendas  Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality  Non-compliance with statutory requirements	L  L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements.  Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council Meetings is managed by the Chairman.	Existing procedures adequate.  Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.

## FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Review Date/Reassessment
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property, or individuals	L	Insurance is in place. Risk assessment of any individual event undertaken.	Existing procedure adequate
Legal Liability	Legality of activities  Proper and timely reporting via Minutes	M	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice where necessary.  Council always receives and approves Minutes at the next Parish Council meeting.	
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with Employment law	L	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from DALC or District Council where necessary.	
<b>COUNCILLORS PROPRIETY</b>				
Members interests	Conflict of interest  Register of Members Interests	M  L	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of a meeting.  Register of Members Interests form to be reviewed on an annual basis	Existing procedures adequate  Members to take responsibility to update their register.

Reviewed : May 2025

Next review date: April 2026

Signed:..... Date:.....