

Grove Parish Council

Financial Risk Assessment – 2026 – 2027

<u>Risk Assessment</u>	<u>Clerk's Comments</u>
<p>Loss of the Proper Officer and or RFO for any length of time/upon death in office:</p>	<p>The loss of the Proper Officer and or RFO for any length of time through serious illness/death can have serious implications if certain procedures are not in place:</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk will automatically assume the role of 'Proper Officer' of the Council. The Clerk will assume the duties of the Responsible Financial Officer if the current incumbent is incapacitated for a period exceeding one month or upon death. The Deputy Clerk will also assume the role of RFO if in the event that both the Clerk and RFO are incapacitated or other.</p>
<p>Risk identification: The protection of physical assets owned by the council; public liability; the risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party; fidelity guarantee (loss of cash through theft or dishonesty).</p>	<p>A comprehensive insurance cover protects these.</p> <p>Fidelity guarantee is reviewed by the Internal Auditor and upgraded as and when necessary.</p> <p>Employers Liability is set at £5,000,000.00 and Public Liability is set at £10,000,000.00.</p>
<p>There are areas where the parish council needs to work with others to manage the risk.</p>	<p>Play equipment at council parks and open spaces are inspected and maintained.</p> <p>There is a weekly visual check by our own councillors and or staff, as well as a quarterly inspection RoSPA. Maintenance is undertaken by council staff and contractors</p> <p>We rely on the Local Association of Councils, our county and district councils and the Playing Fields Association for advice from trees through to legal matters.</p> <p>In addition to the above the council continues its membership of the Grounds Management Association (formerly the Institute of Groundsman) whose advice, both legal and practical is invaluable.</p> <p>Also, the Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks where both legal and financial advice is given. The Clerk is CiLCA trained.</p> <p>The Council now ensures that all user groups applying to use Council facilities/land carryout their own risk assessment and forward this to the Council Office prior to any event taking place, copies of insurance details are also obtained from user groups.</p>
<p>Areas where there is a need to self-manage risk.</p>	<p>The council employs its own staff for village and ground maintenance so that much of the maintenance is dealt with in-house.</p> <p>With regard to financial dealings the council's insurance company insists on a very strict ruling for ensuring that every item is independently checked, from cash receipts, cheque signing, payroll etc. to stock-checks and computer security.</p> <p>Outgoing mail is handed over at the Post Office counter to Post Office staff to minimise the risk of it being lost.</p> <p>Payments for wages, allowances, grants and goods are verified and checked for accuracy and each cheque is signed by one members and verified by the RFO in addition to verification of the legal power to pay.</p> <p>Regular checks are made with the association of local councils and the local district council to ensure that all requirements are met under employment law.</p>

	<p>A Health and Safety officer is employed to ensure regulations are adhered to at all times. The Council now contracts out payroll (including staff pensions as a result of auto enrolment) and HR matters who ensure HMRC regulations are met and all business activities are checked to ensure they are within council's legal powers.</p> <p>Council meetings and business dealings are scrupulously checked to ensure that the council keeps within its legal boundary.</p>
Internal controls:	<p>Details of assets and investments are updated as they happen and are checked annually.</p> <p>All council physical assets have regular checks. For example, play equipment has a weekly visual check carried out by a Parish Councillor or member of staff and a quarterly check contracted out to RoSPA.</p> <p>A review of risks and the adequacy of cover is assessed annually by the council and the insurance company. The internal auditor's advice is sought as and when required.</p> <p>The Council's insurance is one of only a handful of companies specialising in parish council work and we find that this is a strong, healthy company.</p> <p>A financial software package (Omega from RBS) is used by the Council that allows the RFO to scrutinise the accounts in more detail and therefore minimises the risk of accounting errors.</p> <p>All banking transactions (paying of invoices) are carried out electronically. The Clerk or Deputy Clerk will initiate the transaction which is then checked and authorised, verified by a nominated member of the Council.</p> <p>Bank reconciliations are carried out monthly and are reviewed by the designated member from Finance and General Purposes committee.</p> <p>All VAT returns are dealt with quarterly and as with all financial matters these are carefully checked and procedures are documented where necessary.</p> <p>A separate VAT register is maintained by staff to ensure that the total VAT reclaimed does not exceed £7,500 per year specifically for expenditure for Old Mill Hall.</p>
Internal audit assurance:	<p>The internal auditor carries out an interim and annual audit of internal controls and their documentation, management arrangements for insurance cover, minutes, financial records and so on and then the auditor's findings are reported to the council for action where necessary.</p>

We consider the risks to the council to be low due to the above measures taken.

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Chairman

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Date