

**SAMPFORD COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SETTING 2026/27 PRECEPT**

Likelihood/Severity 1 = Low 2 = Medium 3= High

The Likelihood score is multiplied by the Severity score to give an overall score.

The higher this is, the greater the need to implement measures to reduce the score.

Subject	Risk Identified	Likelihood	Severity	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Importance
<p><b>Number of hours budgeted for New Clerk</b></p>	<p>Following the adjustment in the hours for Parish Clerk, despite the reduction in meetings, could be insufficient to meet the statutory responsibilities of the Council</p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>following a review current wage has been calculated on 16 hours per month with contingency for hours to cover 3 additional meetings in the year</p> <p>Regular review with Clerk to assess work load</p> <p>Review planned for completion of 6 month probation period to consider workload/hours against current pay and conditions</p> <p>Review of responsibilities undertaken by Councillors in support of Parish services</p> <p>Review and change to process for meetings, management of contact and responsibilities to reduce work load</p>		<p><b>3</b></p>

<b>Increase in national wage</b>	Insufficient funds to meet the statutory obligations to staff	1	3	<p>Consideration has already been made to increase the wages for the clerk on an incremental basis. In respect of contractors including the toilet cleaner and Web administrator allowance has been made in the Forecast budget to meet the new NLW set at £12.71</p> <p>Sufficient Unearmarked cashflow has been proposed to meet any shortfall mid year due to the payment of the Precept in two instalments and at end of year to meet final payments above the forecast provision</p>		3
<b>Financial Records and controls</b>	Inadequate records Financial irregularities Council not carrying out best practice in line with changes to Govt financial legislation resulting in failure of external audit	1 1 1	3 3 3	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which sets out the requirements.</p> <p>Regular Internal audit RFO to attend training if necessary</p> <p>Periodic Review of Computer system</p>	<p>Annual Review of Financial Regulations undertaken by RFO and Chair with new national regs to be adopted at AGM</p> <p>Recording Procedures advised by the Internal Auditor in place to cover all income/expenditure.</p> <p>Regular Back up (External hard drive)</p>	3 3 3
	Loss of electronic records	1	3			3
<b>Bank and banking</b>	Lack of control over banking/ procedures/ checks	1	2	<p>The Council has Financial regulations which set out the requirements for banking and reconciliation of the Parish Council bank accounts. The bank statements are monitored on a monthly basis and any irregularities are raised with the bank immediately.</p> <p>Full reconciliation/reports presented to Parish Council meetings.</p>	<p>Existing procedures ensure that banking controls are followed and are adequate including dual signatory authorisations.</p> <p>(online Banking with Unity makes accountability more immediate)</p>	2 1
	Mistakes by the bank Charges	1	1			
<b>Cash, cheque Handling</b>	Loss through theft by staff or others of monies paid to the Clerk	1	1	<p>Clerk holds no petty cash.</p> <p>Occasional cash receipts paid in asap at North Tawton Post Office.</p> <p>Occasional cheque receipts posted to Unity Bank.</p>	<p>Existing procedures are adequate.</p> <p>Cash deposits incur a bank charge, but currently is off-set by bank interest.</p>	1

<b>Urgent Expenditure</b>	Further damage or risk to property, staff, general public	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	Chair or Clerk authorised emergency spending of up to £100 which must be reported and justified at the next full Council meeting	Existing procedures are adequate	<b>3</b>
<b>Budgets</b>	Insufficient funds are provided under a budget head	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	Monthly budget monitoring should be undertaken by the Clerk and shortfalls highlighted to the full council meetings	Use of variance analysis of previous budgets to provide guidance when producing budget. Clerk minutes to show if funds are transferred from one budget head to another	<b>2</b>
<b>Reporting and auditing</b>	Reporting Information communication Compliance	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	SCPC is presented with a report by the Clerk which includes the current financial position and details of income and expenditure. Members have the opportunity to discuss, question, review financial matters during the Full Parish Council meeting.	Existing procedures are adequate	<b>1</b>
<b>Grants</b>	Receipt of grants	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	SCPC currently receives an annual Grant from Chase Milton Energy (re Windturbine at Honeychurch) This is a restricted fund and their conditions are that it is used for an ecological project if possible.	On receipt each year, full council decide which Ear marked Reserve or project should benefit from this grant, in line with the Parish Priorities.	<b>1</b>
<b>Grants and support payable</b>	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	All such expenditure must adhere to the Council process of approval, being minuted and listed accordingly when payment is made using S137 powers of expenditure.	Existing procedures meet requirements.	<b>1</b>
<b>Parish Council run activities</b>	Financial Loss	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	SCPC tend not to run activities themselves, but will support other parish organised activities.	Each activity is assessed individually	<b>1</b>
<b>Best value accountability</b>	Work awarded incorrectly.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	Financial Regulations followed. 3 Quotations/ estimates requested for work costing in excess on £1k. Financial controls to be undertaken and monitored. Procurement procedures to be followed. Following Parish Council approval, where possible, local trades people will be awarded contracts/work.	Existing procedure adequate.	<b>2</b>
	Overspend on services.	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		Ensure procedures are included in Financial regulations and review annually.  Review contracts annually	<b>4</b>
<b>Cover for work undertaken by Contractors</b>	Claim received for injury or damage to property allegedly caused by a contractor working on behalf of the Parish Council.	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	All contractors must supply evidence of public liability insurance  Risk Assessments for work being undertaken and Safe Systems of work	Maintain a list of preferred contractors with documents updated on an annual basis  Acquire RA and SSW when contractors are employed	<b>6</b>

<b>Salaries and associated costs</b>	Salary paid incorrectly.	1	1	Contract of Employment in place for all employees.  Annual review of salaries to be undertaken before Annual Precept is agreed.	Existing procedures are adequate Annual review to take place.	1
	Unpaid Tax/NI to Inland Revenue resulting in penalties to the Council	1	1		Clerk's Salary is agreed at the Clerk's pay Scale to SCP 24 in the LC2 Substantive range, and hours to remain at 16 per month. Any increase will be based on annual competence assessment or upon the issue of a new contract.	1
	Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid	1 1	1 1			1 1
<b>Employees</b>	Fraud by staff	1	1	The Requirements of the insurance to be adhered to with regards to fraud. Finance reports presented. Internal and external audit controls	Existing procedures meet requirements.  Membership of NALC & LALC	1
	Health and safety breaches	1	1/2/3	All employees to be provided with adequate direction and any safety equipment needed to undertake their roles. Risk Assessments to be undertaken and Safe Systems of Work to be implemented	Regular monitoring of Health and Safety requirements. Risk Assessment to be carried out on annual basis or when there is a significant change.	1/2/3
	Loss of key personnel	1	3	Reference to a continuity plan should be made. Adequate staff levels to be provided so temporary cover can be maintained.	Procedure should be formalised. Annual Review of training requirements	3
<b>VAT</b>	Reclaimed 2 or 3 times per year	1	1	Monthly record of VAT payments kept and reclaimed via Vat126 form at least twice a year.	Existing procedures meet requirements	1
<b>Audit – Internal,  External Annual Return</b>	Financial documentation not submitted as required within time limits	1	3	Internal Auditor is appointed by the Council and is supplied with any documents requested and allowed access to the accounting software and bank account.  External Audit Exemption completed and to be signed by the Council, submitted to internal auditor for completion and relevant checks and submitted within time frame specified.	Existing procedures meet requirements  New Internal Auditor appointed at Dec meeting. – Crediton Town Clerk	3
	Records not maintained as required	1	3		PK F Littlejohn has been appointed as our External Auditor for the next 5 years	3
	Statutory and Council regulations not adhered to	1	3			3

<b>Legal Powers</b>	Illegal activity or payments	1	2	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved/approved by full Council Meetings, with all decisions minuted.  Control presented through monthly finance reports	Existing procedures meet requirements	2
<b>Members interests</b>	Conflict of interests	1	3	Declarations of interest by members included on agenda for each full Council meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.	3
	Register of members interests not maintained	2	2	Register of members interests reviewed regularly and passed on to the local authority.	Members responsible for updating the register	4
<b>Minutes/ agendas/ Notices &amp; Statutory Documents</b>	Inaccurate and illegal official business documents	1	1	Minutes and agenda are produced by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements and best practice guidelines.  Minutes are consecutively numbered, signed and dated by the chairman.	Existing procedures meet requirements.  Members adhere to Code of Conduct	1
	Business misconduct	1	1	Agenda and minutes are displayed according to legal requirements.  Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chairman.	All councillors should be encouraged to undertake training	1
<b>Insurance</b>	Inadequate	1	1/2/3	An annual review should be undertaken of all insurance arrangements to include: • Employers and Employee liabilities • Fidelity • Public Liability • Assets and Equipment Ensure compliance measures are in place	Annual review of requirements each  (Renewal 1.6.25).	1/2/3
	Excessive Cost	1				
	Non-Compliant	1				
<b>Litigation</b>	Risk of legal action being taken against the Council	2	2	Public Liability insurance would cover general personal injury claims if the Council were found to be at fault.	Insurance is adequate, but there remains a low risk of spurious or frivolous claims which cannot be insured against. Special EMR fund for Legal advice.	4
<b>Data protection</b>	Compliance with GDPR	2	3	Website updated to ensure compliance. Ensure all members are aware of their obligations with regard to GDPR The Clerk to ensure compliance with regard to the keeping of records	Help sheets provided for all groups that submit copy for the website.	6

<b>Email Accounts for Councillors &amp; Clerk</b>	Separate emails to private accounts	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	Clerk has set up Gmail accounts for all councillors and herself.	All councillors now using this new email account for council correspondence.	<b>3</b>
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Lack of Policy Provision	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	The Council publishes documents as required.	Monitor any requests made under FOI	<b>2</b>
<b>Assets</b>	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third party property Risk/damage to third party	<b>1</b> <b>1</b> <b>1</b>	<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>2</b>	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance, maintenance and storage provision.  Insurance and asset registers are updated annually	Existing procedures meet requirements  Annual Independent Inspection of Playground Equipment.	<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>2</b>
<b>Maintenance</b>	Poor performance of assets or amenities. Risk to third parties	<b>1</b> <b>1</b>	<b>1/2/3</b> <b>1/2/3</b>	All assets owned by the Parish Council should be regularly inspected, reviewed and maintained. All repairs are actioned in accordance with agreed procedures. Assets are insured.	A register of the inspection of assets should be kept	<b>1/2/3</b> <b>1/2/3</b>
<b>Electronic and Paper Council Records</b>	Risk of loss/damage through theft/fire/corruption of computer equipment	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	The Council's electronic records are stored on laptop. (External hard drive arranged)  Paper documents are kept secure.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely so existing procedures meet requirements	<b>2</b>
<b>Building Maintenance</b>	Risk of injury to Members of the public/visitors	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	Produce and keep up to date a planned programme of building maintenance to prevent (as far as possible), emergency repairs Regularly undertake risk assessments	Ensure that a full building survey is carried out every 5 years Full Risk Assessments to be carried out annually. (Public Toilets, 2 x Bus Shelters)	<b>4</b>

Risk Assessment is a systematic general examination of working practices, conditions and policies that will enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential inherent risks regarding the forecast budget. This document has been produced to enable Sampford Courtenay Parish Council to assess the financial risks it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. Based on a recorded assessment, the Parish Council will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate risks insofar as is practically possible.

Completed

Date 6/5/2026