SHERFIELD ENGLISH PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT RISK REGISTER 2026/27

Ref	Risk/Trigger	Risk Action[i]	Current Risk Management	Impact Rating[ii]	Likelihood Rating[iii]	Risk Rating[iv]	Further Action Required
STRATEGIC							
S01	Failure to attract sufficient candidates for **Member vacancies** or elections, leading to unfilled seats	Reduce	- Public notices of vacancies - Targeted local awareness campaigns (social media, newsletters, posters) - Promotion of meetings and encourage attendance to generate interest in being part of the Council	3	3	9	Add page to website containing basic role description
S02	Lack of **public consultation** on key decisions, leading to poor community engagement, reduced trust and reputational damage	Reduce	- Statutory consultations conducted when required - Use surveys, drop-in events, and online tools for non-statutory consultations - All consultations relating to the village shared via website and social media - Public participation at Council meetings encouraged - Build ongoing two-way communication with local stakeholders	3	2	6	

S03	Council **decisions not implemented**, leading to delays in service delivery, damage to public trust and potentially legal or financial exposure	Reduce	- Decisions recorded in meeting minutes - Regular agenda item to receive updates on outstanding and ongoing actions - Regular communication between Clerk and Council Members	3	2	6	
S04	Loss of the **Parish Clerk's** services due to resignation, illness, or other absence, leading to disruption in council administration, delays in decision-making, and potential non-compliance with statutory duties	Reduce	- Clear job description and documented procedures maintained - Use of locum clerk/s or temporary cover arrangements	3	3	9	Develop and maintain a detailed handover document Develop and maintain a business continuity plan
S05	Lack of timely or adequate **professional advice** leading to uninformed decision-making, increased risk of non-compliance, financial loss, or reputational damage	Reduce	- Qualified Clerk - Access to external legal, financial and governance advisors - Training and development opportunities for Council Members and staff - Membership of HALC/NALC	4	2	8	Allow budget provision for professional consultancy services, when needed

S06	Failure to accurately identify or understand the **local community's needs and wishes**, leading to misaligned services, reduced community satisfaction, and loss of trust	Reduce	- Open forum at each Council meeting - Annual Parish Assembly - Contact/Feedback mechanisms through website and email - Established partnerships with local organisations and stakeholders	3	2	6	
S07	**Negative media coverage or public perception** damaging the Council's reputation, leading to loss of public trust and reduced community support	Reduce	- Chairman is designated spokesperson for media relations - Monitoring of media and social media channels - Proactively engage with community to build positive relationships - Respond swiftly and transparently to negative coverage - Access to training available, if required	3	2	6	

S08	Low levels of **public participation** in Council meetings leading to reduced transparency, diminished community trust, and lack of representation of community views	Reduce	- Public notices and agendas published in advance - Meetings held at accessible time and location - Opportunities for public questions and comments - Enhanced communication to raise awareness of key matters - Use of diverse engagement channels (social media, website, newsletters)	2	3	6	Monitor legislation for changes in virtual meeting attendance options to increase accessibility
S09	**Disaster impacting the village**, natural or man-made disasters (e.g., severe flooding, major storm, wildfire, gas leak, or large-scale infrastructure failure) affecting the safety, infrastructure and functioning of the village. Potential impacts include evacuation, disruption to essential services, damage to property and risk to life.	Share	- Respond to instructions from emergency services and Test Valley Borough Council / Hampshire County Council emergency planning team - Village hall available as temporary shelter - Community Resilience Plan being drafted	4	2	8	
S10	**Damage to third party** property or individuals as a consequence of Council activity or failure to ensure adequate health and safety	Insure	- Health & safety checks before and during each activity - Risk Assessment carried out during preparation for events and activities - Adequate insurance - Training available	4	2	8	

COMPLIANCE							
C01	Failure to achieve **quorum** at meetings, resulting in delayed decision-making, inability to conduct business, and reputational damage	Reduce	- Meeting schedule agreed and published in advance - Agendas sent ahead of time - Members encouraged to submit advance notice of apologies for absence - Engage with Members to understand and address barriers to attendance - Regular attendance monitoring - Maintain up-to-date contact details and communication protocols	4	2	8	Strengthen succession planning and recruitment of Members
C02	Failure to respond to electors wishing to exercise their **statutory right to inspect accounts** and related documents, potentially resulting in non-compliance with audit legislation, legal challenge, and reputational damage	Reduce	- Inspection period published in accordance with statutory deadlines - Clear internal calendar of key audit dates - Named contact officer for inspection requests - Statutory rights guidance included on website and noticeboards	4	2	8	

C03	Members **acting independently or without authority** outside of formal Council meetings, potentially leading to reputational harm, breaches of the Code of Conduct, invalid decisions, or legal challenge	Reduce	- Member Code of Conduct in place - Standing Orders & Financial Regulations clearly define levels of authority and kept up to date and accessible - Address inappropriate behaviour promptly through Chairman or Monitoring Officer - Training available on roles and responsibilities - Induction programme for new Members	4	2	8	
C04	Meeting **minutes** that are inaccurate, delayed, or fail to properly record decisions, leading to legal risk, loss of transparency, disputes over decisions, or reputational damage	Reduce	- Draft minutes reviewed by Chairman before publication - Minutes approved and signed at subsequent meeting - Use of consistent minuting format - Training on minute-taking standards available, as required - Internal quality checks for accuracy and clarity	4	2	8	

C05	Inadequate **document control**, including poor version tracking, insecure storage, or difficulty retrieving records, leading to data loss, non-compliance with statutory obligations, inefficiency, or reputational harm	Reduce	- Basic naming conventions and folder structures in use - Regular backups taken - Version control protocols (v0.1 etc for drafts, v1.0 etc when adopted)	3	2	6	Adopt a formal document management policy as part of GDPR overhaul
C06	Failure to recognise or properly address **conflicts of interest**, resulting in compromised decision-making, legal or reputational risk, or breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct	Reduce	- Members' Code of Conduct in place - Declaration of Interests is a standing agenda item - Register of Interests maintained and published - Training on identifying and declaring interests available - Annual reminder to Members to review and update their Register of Interests - Standing Orders provide a clear procedure for managing declared interests in meetings - Conflict-of-interest guidance included in new member induction	4	2	8	

C07	Incomplete or inaccurate **Register of Members' Interests**, leading to undeclared conflicts, breaches of the Code of Conduct, potential legal challenges, and reputational damage	Reduce	- Annual reminder sent to Members to update Register - Register published on Council website - New Members complete register on appointment - Regular audits of Register entries for completeness and accuracy - Members reminded of their ongoing obligations during meetings - Training on Members' Interests available	4	2	8	
C08	Failure to complete or submit the **Annual Return** by the statutory deadline, resulting in non-compliance, possible audit qualification, financial penalties, and reputational damage	Reduce	- Annual Return deadline included in Council calendar - Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer assigned to oversee preparation - Detailed timetable for preparation, review and submission established - Staff training on Annual Return requirements available - Contingency planning for staff absence during key periods	4	2	8	

C09	Allegations of **libel or slander** against Council Members or staff, leading to legal action, reputational damage, and financial costs	Reduce	- Council Members sign up to Code of Conduct - Obtain legal advice promptly when allegations arise - Training available on professional and respectful communication, defamation laws and communications	4	2	8	Develop a complaints and dispute resolution process
C10	Lack of adequate knowledge or understanding of relevant **laws and regulations** by Council Members or staff, leading to non-compliance, legal challenges, and reputational damage	Reduce	- Qualified Clerk - Access to legal advice - Training sessions on key legislation available - Availability of updated legal resources - Consultation with legal experts before decisions, as needed - Monitor legislative changes impacting the Council	4	2	8	
C11	Failure to comply with **data protection** laws and regulations (e.g., GDPR), resulting in legal penalties, data breaches and reputational damage	Reduce	- Staff training on data protection available - Clerk appointed as Data Protection Officer (DPO) - Secure data handling and storage practices - Storage of data limited to essential - Access to data limited to essential	4	2	8	Prepare data protection policy and procedures, including breach response protocols

C12	**Employer Liabilities**	Insure	- Councillor training available to ensure compliance with employment law	3	2	6	

FINANCIAL							
F01	Inadequate **insurance** coverage exposing the Council to financial loss, liability claims and operational disruptions in the event of incidents	Reduce	- Regular insurance reviews and renewals, updating policies to reflect current risks and assets - Risk assessments to identify coverage need - Maintain documentation of all insurance policies	4	2	8	
F02	Failure to accurately calculate or submit the **precept** by the statutory deadline, resulting in delayed funding, financial shortfalls, and potential legal issues	Reduce	- Established timeline and calendar for precept process - Financial planning procedures - Earlier internal deadlines for draft and final precept submission	4	2	8	
F03	Setting an inadequate **precept** or preparing an unsound **budget**, leading to insufficient funds to meet Council obligations, service disruptions and financial instability	Reduce	- Regular financial reviews and forecasting at Council meetings - Use of historical data and expert advice - Establish contingency reserves - Training available for Councillors on financial matters	4	2	8	

F04	Failure to correctly account for and recover **VAT**, resulting in financial loss, penalties, and non-compliance with tax regulations	Reduce	- Use of experienced finance personnel - VAT training available - Liaise with tax advisors as needed - Clear VAT recording and documentation process	3	2	6	
F05	**Exceeding agreed budgets**, leading to financial strain, reduced service delivery, and potential loss of stakeholder confidence	Reduce	- Regular budget monitoring and reporting at Council meetings - Adopted approval processes for payments and expenditure - Reserves maintained	4	2	8	
F06	Holding **reserves** that are either **excessive or inadequate**, leading to inefficient use of resources or financial vulnerability	Reduce	- Financial forecasting and risk assessment - Regular reserve level reviews - Adjust reserves in line with financial strategy and anticipated needs	3	2	6	Prepare reserves policy
F07	Risk of **fraudulent** activities committed by the **Clerk**, leading to financial loss, reputational damage and legal consequences	Reduce	- Annual internal audit - Financial controls and approval processes - Internal controls - Fraud awareness training available - References obtained as part of staff recruitment	4	2	8	

F08	Risk of **fraudulent** activities committed by **Councillors**, leading to financial loss, damage to the Council's reputation, and legal consequences	Reduce	- Councillors sign up to adhere to Code of conduct - Declarations of interests recorded - Transparency in decision-making - Standing Orders & Financial Regulations provide roles, responsibilities and authorisation levels	4	2	8	Establish whistleblowing and reporting procedure
F09	Inaccurate, incomplete or poorly maintained **financial records**, leading to errors in reporting, audit failures and potential financial mismanagement	Reduce	- Annual internal audit - Financial report to each Council meeting including bank reconciliation - Staff training on financial record-keeping available - Strict record-keeping protocols	4	2	8	
F10	Failure to meet **HMRC requirements**, including accurate tax filings and timely payments, resulting in penalties, interest charges, and reputational damage	Reduce	- HMRC Basic Tools used for payroll processing - Regular payroll and tax processing checks - HMRC updates monitored - Staff training on HMRC regulations available - Maintain up-to-date records and documentation - Established internal deadlines ahead of HMRC due dates	4	2	8	

OPERATIONAL							
O01	Improper **contracting procedures**, including failure to follow procurement rules or inadequate documentation, leading to financial loss, legal challenges and reputational damage	Reduce	- Financial Regulations, including procurement policy in place - Contracts approved at Council meetings - Training on contracting and procurement - Clear documentation and record-keeping for all contracts	4	2	8	
O02	Loss of important **data** stored on laptop due to hardware or software failure, resulting in operational disruption, loss of records, and potential data breach	Reduce	- Regular backups to secure external storage device - Antivirus and security software installed and updated - Training on data handling and saving protocols	4	2	8	
O03	Failure to adequately monitor and manage performance of **contractors** or partners delivering work, goods or services, resulting in substandard outcomes, delays, financial loss and reputational damage	Reduce	- Clear partnership agreements with defined performance standards - Regular performance monitoring	3	2	6	

O04	Failure to accurately maintain and update the **fixed assets register**, leading to incomplete records, financial misstatements and potential loss or misuse of assets	Reduce	- Asset register recorded - Annual review and reconciliation of asset records with physical assets	3	2	6	
O05	Damage, vandalism or neglect of **bus shelters** leading to safety hazards, increased maintenance costs and negative public perception	Reduce Insure	- Prompt repair of reported damage - Encourage community to report issues	4	2	8	Develop a maintenance and inspection plan, including routine inspections and cleaning schedules
O06	**Notice board** adjacent to the Bus Shelter may suffer from weather damage, vandalism, outdated or inaccurate information, reducing effectiveness and community engagement	Reduce Insure	- Regular inspections and updates - Weatherproof and durable materials - Routine maintenance and content review - Replace or repair damage promptly	2	2	4	Develop a maintenance and inspection plan, including routine inspections and cleaning schedules

O07	**Defibrillators** may be unavailable or malfunction due to lack of maintenance, battery failure or vandalism, risking lives during emergencies	Reduce Insure	- Regular checks and maintenance schedule - Secure housing to prevent vandalism - Public awareness of locations - Routine battery replacements	3	2	6	

[i] Eliminate, Reduce, Transfer, Share, Insure, Accept

[ii] 1 = negligible, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high

[iii] 1 = negligible, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high

[iv] Risk rating's of 12 and above will be subject to detailed consideration and/or preparation of a contingency/action plan to appropriately control the risk (Risk Management Strategy, para 5.4)