

Hilborough Parish Council

Financial Risk Assessment

Adopted at Parish Council Meeting 20th January 2026

This Financial Risk Assessment is in place to protect the electorate from financial risks in the Parish of Hilborough.

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1. Financial Control Procedures

- 1.1 The role of Clerk is combined with the role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Proper Officer for Hilborough Parish Council. Each year during appraisal the list of duties will be reviewed by an appointed Parish Councillor, who will report at the following Parish Council meeting for agreement and minuted.
- 1.2 All financial documents will be held by the RFO, authorised payments will be entered on the Parish Council computer with back up of computerised systems to take place every other month with a copy kept off site.
- 1.3 The RFO will raise a full payments sheet for all payments for Full Council authorising at each bi-monthly meeting. All payments will be minuted. The RFO shall enter all payments and receipts in the cash book and annual budget records.
- 1.4 All cheques to be signed at Parish meetings by two of the three appointed cheque signatories, with the cheque stub initialled. BACS payments are to be set up by the RFO and authorised by two signatories.
- 1.5 Where payments are made by cheque, the cheque number and date of issue to be written on all invoices. Where invoices are paid by direct debit or standing order, two cheque signatories will initial the mandate prior to establishing payment with on-line banking. No payments will be made by the RFO without full Council authorisation, other than when contract payments are due for payment before a bi-monthly meeting. These payments will be reported by the Clerk at the following meeting and minuted.
- 1.6 Any cash or cheques received by the RFO will be banked as soon as possible after receipt. Where cash is received the RFO will write the payee name & receipt number on the deposit slip.
- 1.7 The RFO will reclaim VAT annually after the financial year is closed. Payment will be entered in the following financial year's

budget.

- 1.8 Bank statements will be reconciled *bi*-monthly with the cash book, financial budget, cheque stubs, direct debits and standing order payments. The payment entries will be cross referenced to the computerised budget and payment list.

2 Procedure for Safeguarding Public Money Spending

- 2.1 No expenditure other than postage, general stationery and mileage for Parish Council business will be incurred by the RFO or any Councillor without the approval of the full Parish Council within parish council meetings and fully minuted.
- 2.2 All cheque payments will have two authorised bank signatures on each cheque, with initials by the same people on the cheque stub.
- 2.3 No petty cash is held in place within the Parish Council.
- 2.4 Cheque signatories complete a bank mandate form for the Parish Council bank completing all security checks before authorisation.
- 2.5 When signatories are changed (e.g. standing down or not standing for election) the RFO is to obtain the appropriate forms from the Parish Council's Bank for deletion and addition. There are always three cheque signatories at any one time plus the RFO for bank administration.
- 2.6 The Clerk/RFO will maintain a Register of Interests of all Councillors. It is the Councillor's responsibility to advise Breckland District Council of any changes to those interests.
- 2.7 The RFO will maintain monthly HMRC returns for all salary payments made to Employees, including sub-contractors and any part-time staff. All HMRC payments are to be made within time constraints, with all relevant paperwork kept on file for audit purposes.

2.8 An independent Internal Auditor shall be decided annually, this person will have no connection to the Parish Council, will not be related to any Councillor and shall have experience with all aspects of account work, although does not need to be qualified. All financial figures and Council Governance will be checked and signed off with a written report submitted. The report is discussed by full council and before the annual audit papers are completed and submitted to the appointed external auditors.

2.9 When a vacancy arises for Clerk/RFO, the Parish Council is to obtain references concerning the selected candidate.

3. Budget Review Procedure

3.1 The next year's budget discussion will take place in November to determine the required Precept for the following financial year

3.2 The RFO will produce for the Parish Council a full budget showing all expenditure and receipts giving actual expenditure to date.

3.3 All contracts for work undertaken will be reviewed annually or when contracts finish. The Clerk/RFO will obtain at least three quotes for value of over £300 for comparison by the Council. Quotes under £300 the Clerk obtains one quote and reports to the full Council at the following Parish meeting.

4. Public Liability Insurance

4.1 Public Liability Insurance cover will be reviewed at the Parish Council meeting in May of each year to ensure adequate cover is maintained.

4.2 The Clerk/RFO will ensure Fidelity Insurance is correctly in place.

4.3 An Asset Register is to be maintained by the Clerk and updated with any changes as they take place. An Assets inspection to be undertaken annually around July of each year by an appointed Councillor with a report to Council at the following meeting.

5. Parish Council as an Employer

5.1 A Contract of Employment will be issued to Clerk/RFO within 13 weeks of commencing employment. A statement of terms and conditions will be issued on the first day of employment.

5.2 Financial remunerations to be paid to the Clerk/RFO towards cost of electricity, use of office space, and if used, to cover personal use of equipment if the Parish Council does not own. To be reviewed annually at Clerk's annual assessment. Any travel (other than mileage) expenses are to be confirmed by resolution within a Parish Meeting for Clerk/RFO or any Councillor. Mileage at the recognised maximum statutory mileage allowance, is paid solely for Parish Council business.

5.3 A laptop is to be provided by the Parish Council, with a review of replacement every three to five years as appropriate. All costs of stationery, IT consumables or printing charges paid for by the Clerk/RFO will be repaid by the Council with an appropriate VAT tax invoice as proof of purchase.

5.4 The Clerk/RFO Job description to be reviewed annually during the Clerk/RFO appraisal with an allocated Councillor. Any matters highlighted during the appraisal will be discussed at the end of the following Parish meeting, in private with no public or media present. Decisions that are addressed will be minuted. This decision will be agreed by full Council based on performance and within the Contract of Employment.

5.5 Training for the Clerk/RFO to be provided, when identified either by the Clerk/RFO or the Parish Council to carry out the role effectively and professionally.