

ARRETON PARISH COUNCIL

RISK ASSESSMENT 2024

Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

Audit Commission – Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government (2001:5)

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. The Council is aware that although some risks can never be eliminated fully, it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk. The list is not exhaustive and the Parish Council may wish to consider other risks not identified. The table below:

- Identifies the subject
- Identifies what the risk may be
- Identifies the level of risk, giving the likelihood that the issue could occur and the potential level of harm if it did
- Evaluates the management and control of the risk and records findings
- Reviews, assesses and revises procedures if required.

MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score		Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
		H/M/L	Likelihood/Harm		
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	M	In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chairman to contact SLCC or IWALC for advice. Clerk to ensure that records are up to date and available if cover is needed. A contingency fund is included in the budget to cover long-term sickness.	Review when necessary
Meeting location	Adequacy Unavailability of a venue	L H	L L	Meetings are held in the Arreton Community Hall which has disabled access. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and any members of the public who attend. Two other venues are available in the Parish – the Methodist Church Hall and Haseley Manor Barn. Both have disabled access and are considered to be adequate.	Existing procedure adequate

Council Records	Loss through theft, fire, damage	L	L	Papers required to be kept for more than three years will be held at the IW Record Office. Papers less than three years old and minute and finance books which are still being used are stored at the home of the Clerk. Files relating to the burial grounds are stored at the Burial Registrar's home.	There is no alternative provision
Council Records (electronic)	Loss through damage, fire, corruption of computer	M	M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored remotely in One Drive. The Clerk's computer is protected by Bitdefender Premium Business Anti-virus software.	Existing procedure adequate.
FINANCE					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L Likelihood/Harm		Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	H	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept. The Parish Council receives detailed budgets in the late autumn. Expenditure against budget is reported regularly to the full Council meeting. The precept is an agenda item at the December meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L L L M	H H H H	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers Liability, Public Liability and Fidelity Guarantee are a statutory requirement.	Existing procedure adequate. Review provision and compliance annually.
Banking	Inadequate checks	L	M	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. Accounts are annually reviewed by internal and external audit.	Existing procedures adequate. Review Financial Regulations as necessary
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	M	No petty cash is held by staff. All payments are made by cheque, BACS or direct debit drawn on the Council's bankers. Any cash transactions made by the Clerk are fully receipted and then reimbursed monthly on receipt of an invoice.	Existing procedures adequate

Financial controls and records	Inadequate checks	L	M	<p>Monthly reconciliation prepared by RFO and checked by Parish Council. Two signatories are required for cheques and withdrawals. The recipient of funds must not sign the cheque. Cheque stubs initialled by signatories. One signatory is required for a BACS payment up to £500, two for payments of £501-£1,000 and three for £1,001 and above.</p> <p>Internal and external audit. Any financial obligation must be resolved and clearly minuted before any commitment.</p> <p>Any s137 payments must be recorded at time of approval.</p>	Existing procedures adequate
Freedom of Information Act	Failure to comply with Act	L	M	<p>The Council has a publication scheme in place. The Clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work. The Council is able to request a fee if the work will take over 15 hours. However the request can be resubmitted, broken down into sections, thus negating the payment of a fee. For requests over six hours, an initial response will be sent and the Parish Council informed of the request at the next meeting. Minutes are open and available on the Parish Council's website.</p>	Monitor and report any impacts made under the Act

Clerk	Loss of clerk	M	M	A contingency fund has been established to cover recruitment, additional subscription costs and training for an unqualified clerk.	Include in financial statement when setting precept Membership of NALC and SLCC maintained. Monitor working conditions and hours of work.
	Fraud	L	M	The requirements of Fidelity Guarantee insurance must be adhered to.	
	Actions undertaken	L	H	Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice. Clerk to be aware of the publication of new editions of reference books.	
VAT	Incorrect re-claiming/charging	L	M	VAT claims and payments calculated by the RFO.	Existing procedures adequate
PAYE	Incorrect/missed payment	L	M	PAYE payments calculated by the RFO.	Existing procedures are adequate.
Election Costs	Risk of election cost	M	M	Risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures, which can be adopted to minimise risk of having a contested election. A contingency fund has been established to meet the costs.	Include in financial statement when setting precept
Annual return	Not submitted within time limits	L	M	Annual return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing, then checked and sent on to the External Auditor, if required, within the time limit.	Existing procedures adequate

ASSETS

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L Likelihood/Harm		Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Burial grounds – St George’s Churchyard and Gore Cemetery	Unsafe structures	M	M	Safety of headstones checked regularly by Burial Registrar and annually by the Parish Council. The wall in the churchyard is maintained by the Parish Council.	Reporting of safety issues to be included in the grounds’ maintenance contract
Gore Cemetery	Unsafe building	L	M	Shed checked regularly. Annual inspection by the Parish Council.	Existing procedures adequate.

Street Furniture/ Dog Bins	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L	L	Parish Council has four benches, nine stone planters and three dog bins as listed in the Asset Register (attached). A review of assets undertaken periodically but at least annually for Insurance provision and maintenance. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these are actioned in accordance with correct procedures .	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections are carried out .
Notice Boards	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L	L	Parish Council has four Notice Boards, outside the Methodist Chapel, one in Merstone, one at Merstone Station and one in Blackwater. Monthly regular inspection when displaying notices for meetings.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections are carried out.
Boundary Signs	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third/ parties/property	L	L	Parish Council is responsible for four boundary signs. These were transferred to Island Roads for the 25-year life of their contract – 01/04/2013	

LIABILITY

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L Likelihood/Harm		Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	M	H	Legal advice is sought via IWALC or SLCC where necessary. All activities and payments are made within the powers of the Parish Council and to be resolved and clearly minuted.	
Working Parties taking decisions		L	M	Any working parties are established with clear terms of reference.	Monitor.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Statutory documents	Inaccurate or illegal. Non-compliance with statutory requirements	L	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed way and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by chair. Risk management to be a regular item in meeting agendas. Council meets once a month and receives and approves	Existing procedures adequate. Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.

	Proper and timely reporting via the minutes			minutes of previous meetings. Minutes are made available to the public via the website or from the Clerk.	
Public Liability	Harm to third party, property or individuals	L	M	Insurance is in place. Risk assessment of events is undertaken. A written record of the annual inspection of the burial grounds is kept via the meeting minutes. Burial grounds are checked regularly by the Burial Registrar. Maintenance carried out is to be individually assessed for risk to comply with Health and Safety Regulations.	Review procedures annually.
Employer liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	M	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from, for example, SLCC, NALC and HMRC.	Existing procedures adequate.
Document control	Documents not retained	L	M	Documents are retained in accordance with legal requirements. Documents are held on paper and/or electronically. Documents are held in the Clerk's home. All other data is stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.	Review procedures annually.
Cemetery	Use of mechanical diggers in the cemetery	M	M	All work in the cemetery must comply with the Burial Regulations.	Existing procedures adequate.

COUNCILLORS PROPRIETY

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Risk Score H/M/L <small>Likelihood/Harm</small>		Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members Interests	Conflict of interest Financial Personal	L L	M M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of the meeting. Register of Members Interests form will be reviewed at least on an annual basis.	Existing procedures adequate. Members to take responsibility to update their register.