

Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley Parish Council

Parish Council General Risk Assessment

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Mitigation/control of risk	Risk
Administration, finance and management			
Business continuity	Incapacity or resignation of Clerk	Staff Recruitment Committee to be formed to hire new Clerk. Locum cover can be requested from SALC, Chair to cover work in meantime. Laptop and paper files to be recovered ASAP.	L
Business continuity	Failure to retain/secure necessary number of members for quorate Council	Clerk to track attendance of Councillors at meetings. Advertise for an election immediately a vacancy exists. Co-opt Members where no election is held.	M
Precept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequacy of precept • Request not submitted to Shropshire Council • Precept not received 	Level of precept requested based on budget prepared in November and agreed at January meeting. Clerk to submit precept request following this meeting and by end of January. Shropshire Council sends form to be completed. Council maintains reserves to cover at least 6 months in the event that precept is not received on time.	L
Financial records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	Financial Regulations reviewed regularly and updated when required. Systems of internal control in place. Review of financial systems as part of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Internal Audit report presented to Parish Council meeting. All accounts available for public inspection. The RFO maintains proper records. Payments are authorised by the Council at each ordinary meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Bank reconciliation and budget monitoring reported at each ordinary meeting. The Council has established a system of internal control.	L
Best value, Accountability (contracts and purchasing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work awarded incorrectly • Overspend on services 	Follow processes for contracts and obtaining quotes laid out in Financial Regulations, reviewed at least annually. Normal practice is to seek, if possible, three quotations for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods. For major contract services, formal	L

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		competitive tenders would be sought. All decisions on expenditure over £500 are made at full Council.	
Salaries and associated costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary paid incorrectly • Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to HMRC 	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees at Council meetings (currently just the Clerk), and has a contract of employment. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council and based on agreed NJC rates. Council employs HR company to correctly provide payslips and reports on any tax or NI owed. Council checks any payments made at next Council meeting.	L
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	The risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having an election as this is a legal requirement of the democratic process. Sufficient reserves in place to cover this. Known election costs are included in budget.	L
VAT	Failure to reclaim. Reclaiming ineligible VAT.	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. VAT is accounted for in the cashbook. Internal Audit includes a check on VAT accounting. VAT is reclaimed at least annually.	L
AGAR	Non-compliance with statutory deadlines for the completion/ approval/submission of accounts and other financial returns	Draft annual return provided to Internal Auditor in April. Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council at Annual PC meeting in May. Certificate or exemption or AGAR forms are sent on to the External Auditor and published on website as soon as possible and before deadline.	L
Audit	Non-compliance with internal audit requirements	Appoint internal auditor annually in January, for review in April. Internal auditor should be changed after 3-5 years to ensure impartiality.	L
Council records - paper	Loss through: e.g. theft fire damage	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondence, minute books, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Damage (apart from fire/water) and theft is unavoidable but unlikely. Electronic scans should be taken of any important documents and backed up to the cloud.	M
Council records - Electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire damage Corruption of computer	Electronic data backed up to Cloud weekly. Information Technology outlines best practice.	L
Electronic communications	Council's website or email is not secure	Follow recommendations in Information Technology policy. Councillors and Clerk should not use personal email for Council work. Council should supply equipment where required.	M

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Insurance	Insufficient cover	Insurance provisions reviewed annually. Insurer informed of any new assets or special events. Asset Register updated annually to ensure Council understands value of its assets and seeks sufficient cover.	L
Policies and procedure	Council does not work legally or meet best practice guidance.	Review policies on a rolling basis. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to be reviewed at least annually. Where possible NALC model documents should form basis of policies. All Policies to be published on website and kept up to date.	L
Coronavirus pandemic	Ability to meet affected by pandemic. Transmission of disease at meetings	Facility to deliver online meetings where legal. Alternative dates considered. Government guidelines on social distancing and hygiene followed.	L
Meeting rooms	Rooms unavailable Rooms unsuitable due to lack of accessibility or IT equipment	Book meeting rooms for full year in advance in May. Alternative venues may be considered if unavailable for any reason. Meeting rooms should be checked for suitability before booking.	L
Assets			
Noticeboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or damage Risk of injury to public Inability to sufficiently advertise meetings 	Noticeboards are regularly checked by clerk. Council to fund repairs, if damaged. Agendas and minutes are publicised on the Council website as an alternative to the noticeboard if unavailable.	L
Bus shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or damage Risk of injury to public 	Inspect bus shelters at least annually and fund any repairs required as a result of inspection or reported by public in meantime. Ensure sufficient insurance provision to cover rebuilding shelters if damaged.	L
Defibrillators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or damage Malfunction Unavailable when needed 	Maintain regular checks of defibrillators in line with Defibrillator maintenance policy. Clerk keeps record of when batteries and pad should be replaced. Notify The Circuit ASAP if defibrillators are not available for any reason. Ensure sufficient insurance provision to cover defibrillators.	L
Liability			
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	Council has policies in place for relevant areas and that these are reviewed on a regular basis, particularly Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Clerk to be provided with sufficient training to understand legislation. Follow advice from SALC/NALC on changes to legislation.	L

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		Council reviews its eligibility to claim General Power of Competence annually. All decisions and payments are made/approved at full Parish Council meetings.	
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Business conduct	Minutes and agenda are produced with the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings managed by the Chair. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required). Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.	L
Public Liability	Risk of third party, property or individuals	Insurance is in place and provisions reviewed annually Risk assessments regularly carried out to comply with the requirements. Undertake separate risk assessment for any events or activities outside usual scope of Council work. Do not organise events in excess of 500 attendees, in line with insurance provision.	L
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from SALC where necessary. Comply with Green Book. Use NALC standard contract. Clerk's employment terms reviewed annually at appraisal. Supply any equipment Clerk requires to undertake work safely. Staff grievance committee and procedure in place to help resolve any issues.	L
Legal Liability	Legality of activities Proper and timely reporting via minutes Proper document control	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice from SALC/NALC if necessary. Council always receives and approves minutes of monthly meetings at following meeting. Retention of documents policy in place.	L
Health and safety liability - Contractors	Liability for injury to contractors	Ensure all contractors have sufficient qualifications and skills to undertake work. Request contractor submits plan/risk assessment for all work in advance. Ensure contractors are given sufficient time to undertake tasks.	L
Provision of grants/receipt of Community Benefit funds	Council acts illegally when receiving/distributing Lightsource funds	Council clarified with NALC legal team that Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Parish Council to accept donations for the benefit of the community and empowers the Parish Council to administer the moneys which will include making grants to suitable bodies and does not fall under annual limit of section 137 of the 1972 Act.	L

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Transparency	Failure to meet transparency requirements	Clerk publishes all required documents on Council website, this is reviewed annually by the internal auditor	L
Data Protection	Failure to meet GDPR requirements	Maintain Data Protection policy and ensure Clerk receives relevant training. Maintain registration with ICO. Ensure all relevant policies and statements are published on website.	M
Councillors			
Members interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict of interest Register of Members' interests incomplete 	Councillors declare any interests at the start of every meeting. Register of Members Interest forms completed upon election. Councillors should review their interests regularly. Councillors sign Code of Conduct.	M
Councillors' Conduct	Lack of knowledge of Councillors' role, responsibility and accountability	Offer induction information and training to new councillors. Training budget is available for any training Councillors wish to undertake. Clerk available to offer advice and specialist knowledge where necessary.	L

This Risk Assessment was considered by Council at Agenda item: 24.5.33 14 May 2024 and will be reviewed again in 12 months.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: