

# BARLASTON PARISH COUNCIL

## RISK ASSESSMENT 2024 / 2025.

Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risks threaten a Council's ability to achieve its objectives. The clerk should therefore ensure that members:

- Identify the key risks facing the council
- Evaluate the potential to the council of one of these risks taking place; and
- Agree measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequence.

There are three main ways of managing risk:

- Take out insurance
- Work with another party to reduce the risk; or
- Manage the risk yourself.

Area	Risk	Level	Control <i>(and improvements to be considered)</i>
Assets	Protection of physical assets	M	Property insured to reflect procurement of new assets. Ensure there is an adequate fund within the capital projects / new asset fund.
Finance	Banking	H	<b>Currently the figure held in the bank exceeds £85k which is in excess of the figure under which the FSCS offers protection. Look to move earmarked reserves into a separate banking group.</b>
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	H	No cash. Removed ability of any one individual to access Council's funds.
	Financial controls and records	M	Monthly reconciliation is issued to full council with bank statements. Financial Regulations in place. Two signatories on cheques, bank transfers and invoices. Internal and external audits arranged. Implementation of payments via PayPal restricted to £100 or below for office supplies only and can be approved by the Clerk. Reports to be submitted to full Council. Where payments are made via BACS, a list of payments to be issued to two signatories for approval. Invoices signed off at the Parish Council meeting.
	Comply with VAT Regulations	M	VAT payments and claims reported with budget monitoring and checked by internal and external auditor.
	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept	M	Council receives detailed budgets in December. Expenditure against budget reported to Council on a regular basis. Precept increased to reflect increase in materialistic costs.
	Complying with borrowing restrictions	L	No borrowing likely at present

	General Reserves falling below recommendations made in Practitioners Guide 2022 para 5.33	L	Council to hold sufficient funds to ensure viability of the Council. Figures to be reviewed during the financial year and where the figure is deemed too low, the Clerk / RFO to inform the Parish Council accordingly. Procurement of assets etc., may be delayed if there is a requirement to do so.
Data	Loss of data due to cloud storage failures or mis management	H	Data to be backed up on a physical device on a monthly basis and held off site. Ensure financial management systems are included in off site back ups.
Staffing	<p>Sudden Temporary Loss of Staff – impacting resources, knowledge and skills</p> <p>Possible causes include long term sickness, incapacity, retirement, resignation, or death causing loss of 15 hours of paid employment time Loss of key staff Lack of availability of Clerk.</p>	H	<p>Consider opportunities for succession planning. Develop and adopt a formal business continuity plan. Councillor can provide agenda / minute writing role. Recommend amending Financial Regulations to ensure an Officer is able to authorise emergency expenditure.</p> <p>SLCC offer locum staff in response to sudden departure/incapacity of staff members</p> <p>CILCA qualified Locum Clerk can be appointed to provide necessary hours work per week on a rolling basis contract to be reviewed prior to each month end during period of absence</p> <p>Procedure to be developed for dealing with leavers that ensures that assets are recovered, and knowledge is harnessed so that, any one time, whereabouts of equipment is known and available.</p> <p>Officer appraisal and supervision to take place on regular basis to include setting and monitoring objectives so that, at any time, work planned and in process is known. Exit interview format to be developed to identify outstanding objectives and tasks prior to planned unavailability of employees.</p>
	Council Financial, Legal & Compliance, Delivery	M	Councillors appointed to the relevant sub committees receive appropriate training.
	Use of private email addresses	M	Individual email accounts have been set up following JPAG recommendations. To mitigate any risk, only the Clerk's email address to be published on the website with the recommendation that all correspondences is facilitated by the Clerk.
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance in place. <b>Play equipment checks in place for the MUGA, regular checks are required for the War Memorials and open spaces.</b>

			<p>Tree survey undertaken in 2024, works were undertaken to mitigate risk. Next tree survey to be undertaken in 2026.</p> <p>It was noted a number of trees required maintenance adjacent to the Downs Car Park, it is noted not all the trees were on Parish Council land.</p> <p>It was also noted the tree in the Village Hall Car Park was omitted from the survey, this needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>Company to have public liability insurance to £5m. 2 Cllrs have undertaken the tree survey course.</p>
	Risk to individuals	M	Organised events on the green are via approval from the Clerk. Clerk to be in receipt of a risk assessment and certificate of Public Liability Insurance to the value of £1,000,000 prior to the event commencing.
	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership (especially playground and copses)	H	Insurance in place. Weekly inspections undertaken with the MUGA. <b>Weekly checks on wild play area and monthly check of War Memorials and open spaces. Written records to be kept. Annual check of playgrounds by qualified person arranged.</b>
Employer Liability	Comply with Employment Law	M	Employment contracts and job descriptions introduced. Membership of SLCC and SPCA. Clerk enrolled in LGPS
	Comply with HMRC requirements	M	Regular advice from HMRC. Internal and external auditor carry out annual checks. Payroll managed by independent service provider.
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	H	Clerk clarifies legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice sought where necessary.
	Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes	M	Council meets monthly and receives and approves Minutes of meetings. Minutes made available to press and public via the web site.
	Proper document control	M	Leases and legal documents in Clerks cabinet. Historic documents currently stored in Methodist Church, safe to be moved from the Village Hall. Other data storage to comply with GDPR. Council registered with Information Commissioner. Backup is cloud base, undertaken on a daily basis. Computer now has 2 factor authentication and the latest antivirus software uploaded.

	Tender documentation	M	Ensure tender documents contain the specification requirements; have a control mechanism in place and an opt-out clause if required. Tenders to be undertaken on a timely basis and conform to government guidelines.
	Training	M	Clerk to undertake regular training to ensure legal compliance is maintained.
Councillor propriety	Registers of Interests and gifts and hospitality in place	H	Register of interest completed. <b>Gifts and hospitality register is available on request.</b>
Office Accommodation	Loss of accommodation due to sale of the Church	H	It is noted the Methodist Church are selling off buildings due to limited attendance at Church Services. Recommendation to register Barlaston Methodist Church as a Community Asset.

This risk management paper was considered by the Council on 14 May 2024 and will be reviewed again in 12 months.