



Introduction

Parish Council's should have in place a system to help manage risk. This system needs to be simple for the smallest parishes and more complex for the larger parish and town councils. A council's internal auditor can use this risk management system to help identify what tests to carry out as part of the audit.

Risk management is important. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in financial terms and also in terms of service delivery. Most parish council clerks will already be assessing and managing risks in some way or other, but there may be room to improve and document existing practices.

Parish council officers take a lead on advising the Council on risk management because risks threaten a council's ability to achieve its objectives. They should therefore ensure that they:

- Identify 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.

Every council is different and there is no such thing as a standard list of risks. There are however a number of common themes that are likely to emerge. These might include:

- Physical assets – buildings, equipment, IT hardware etc
- Finance – banking, loss of income, petty cash etc
- Injury to the public – in playgrounds and recreation grounds, in village halls, at burial grounds etc
- Complying with legal requirements – agendas and minutes, burial records etc
- Councillor propriety – declarations of interests, gifts and hospitality etc
- Staff - competence, fidelity and continuity

The Council needs to consider each of the possible risks under each of the identified schemes. For example physical assets could be lost as a result of fire or flood, damaged by vandals, stolen or simply deteriorate through lack of maintenance. All these risks can be minimized or transferred by various means, such as taking out insurance, securing alarms or by regular inspection and maintenance. In addition to identifying risk it is a good idea to make a judgment about likelihood of the risk occurring and its potential impact. Classification need be no more complicated than high, medium or low.

There are three main ways of managing risk:

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

Risk Assessment key: 1 Low to 5 High.

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Assets	Protection of physical assets (playground equipment and park buildings)	Medium 3	Cost of replacing damaged, destroyed or missing assets. Loss of facilities.	Playground equipment covered by all risks insurance Grounds Maintenance Contractor manages on behalf of PC	Current insurance policy. Management Agreement with Grounds Maintenance Contractor	Keep under review current cost of rebuilding main assets and update insurance policy.
Assets	Protection of physical assets (other buildings – Park Hall, railway station, former public conveniences)	Medium 3	Cost of replacing damaged, destroyed or missing assets. Loss of facilities.	Exterior covered by all risks insurance WHG responsible under Lease for contents insurance at Station Buy in professional H&S / risk assessment advisors Contents insurance for Office. Train Parish Clerk to IOSH standard.	Current insurance policy	Keep under review current cost of rebuilding main assets and update insurance policy. Introduce commissioning of annual building condition surveys. Keep under review future arrangements for Park Hall building and office. Assess Park Hall furniture for contents insurance. Separate risk Assessments needed.
Assets	Security of buildings, equipment etc	Medium 3	Cost of replacing damaged, destroyed or missing assets. Facilities out of use for a period.	Council laptops covered by all risks insurance. Regular external backup. Grounds Maintenance Contractor manages Park, rec grounds etc on behalf of PC	Current insurance policy. Management Agreement with Grounds Maintenance Contractor	Level and adequacy of insurance cover and effectiveness of laptop backup system kept under review. Review security of Park Hall building.
Assets	Maintenance of buildings, play-ground equipment, etc	Medium 3	Cost of repairs to deal with normal wear and tear of buildings, equipment, etc Risk of injury to users. Reputational risk and adverse publicity.	Inspection regime by Grounds Maintenance Contractor Asset Protection fund	Management Agreement with Grounds Maintenance Contractor Maintain inspection sheets	Regular visual inspections by staff. Build up asset protection fund separate to free reserves. Compile Forward Plan / Rolling Programme

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Finance	Banking	Medium 3	Cash flow problems. Increased potential for fraud	Regular banking and reconciliation of statements. Mandate kept up to date.	Reconciled bank statements. Current bank mandate.	Review bank mandate to ensure cheque / BACS signatories are up to date.
Finance	Risk of consequential loss of income	Low 1	Loss of key data.	Adequate level of insurance cover. Any important documents scanned, originals to be kept in locked filing cabinet/cupboard in office.	Current insurance policy schedule. Data backup and cloud storage.	Review the need for consequential loss insurance cover. Storage of key documents should be in a fireproof lockable cabinet.
Finance	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	Low 1	Adverse publicity for the council on disclosure. Reputational risk. Financial loss.	No petty cash Adequate level of insurance cover, with a minimum of £10,000.	Insurance policy document Financial Regulations govern handling of cash (if any)	Review level of insurance relevant to size/activity of council.
Finance	Financial controls and records	Medium 3	Lack of control over the Council's assets. Higher likelihood of fraud or misappropriation of assets. Ineffective reporting. Qualified internal and external audit reports.	Accounts and asset register prepared on appropriate computerised accounting system. Bank reconciliations undertaken on a monthly basis. Expenditure payments approved by council. Two council signatories on cheques and BACS payments. Triple authority for any internet payments (two councillors and Parish Clerk)	Quarterly accounts statements internally monitored, signed and reported to Council. Bank reconciliation statements prepared monthly, signed by Parish Clerk. Approved signatories on bank mandate. Computerised asset register reconciled to agreed insurance values.	Update asset register for all future assets purchased. Annual review of Financial Regulations Annual review of Internal Monitoring policy
Finance	Compliance with HMRC regulations	Medium 2	Penalties and/or fines for late returns, errors on submissions etc. Reputational risk and adverse publicity.	Use external advice when necessary. Submit initial VAT return when £100 reached at least annually. Submit payroll end of year returns online, on time. Internal and external audit review.	VAT returns and workings. Payroll submission confirmations.	Ensure VAT period in the accounts is fully closed off after preparing the VAT return.

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Finance	Budgets supporting annual precept	Medium 2	Council receives less funding than is required to meet its obligations and objectives.	Council prepares detailed budget in late Autumn. Precept determined directly from this budget. Actual expenditure versus budget reported to Council.	Annual budget statements of council, with minuted approval. Budget versus actual statements with minuted approval.	.
Finance	Inadequate Reserves / contingency fund	Med 2	Council unable to fund unplanned expenditure. Facilities taken out of commission	Level of reserves to be built up.	End of year accounts	Build up free reserves to 50% of budget by 2026.
Finance	Secretary of State introduces capping of parish precepts	Medium 2	Council prevented from increasing precept	Lobbying by NALC. Direct correspondence with local MP/Sec of State	Minutes	Keep under review.
Finance	Council Tax Support Grant withdrawn by Sec of State or not passed on by billing authority	Medium 3	Reduces income Reputation risk if precept increases	Maintain adequate reserves to avoid increase in precept	End of year balance	Monitor NALC/LRALC bulletins Liaison with NWLDC
Finance	Compliance with borrowing restrictions	Low 1	Council acting outside its powers	Justification for any additional borrowing fully reviewed and approved by Council	Internal and external audit reviews.	No new borrowing being considered at present.
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	Medium 3	Funding cost of a successful action or claim against the Council. Reputational risk.	Public liability insurance cover: PC as owner Grounds Maintenance Contractor as manager	Current insurance policy. Management Agreement with Grounds Maintenance Contractor (£20M)	Review to ensure levels are adequate
Liability	Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (e.g. playgrounds, parks etc)	Medium 3	Funding cost of a successful action or claim against the Council. Reputational risk.	Public liability insurance cover: PC as owner Grounds Maintenance Contractor as manager	Current insurance policy. Management Agreement with Grounds Maintenance Contractor (£20M)	Review to ensure levels are adequate

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	Medium 3	Employee dissatisfaction and disputes, potentially leading to industrial tribunal. Potential TUPE obligations	Employer Liability Insurance. Relevant staff training and experience. Advice from relevant professional advisers and membership bodies e.g. LRALC Code of Conduct training for members	Staff qualifications and training records. Membership confirmation. Contractual arrangements with professional advisers.	Buy in professional HR advice as required
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with HMRC requirements	Medium 3	Fines and penalties for late returns, errors etc. HMRC investigations.	Relevant staff training and experience. Advice from HMRC as required. Internal and external audit reviews.	Records of HMRC returns and submissions.	
Employer Liability	Safety of staff and visitors	Low 1	Funding cost of a successful action or claim against the Council. Reputational risk.	Adequate insurance.	Current insurance policy	Review premises risk for staff with Members of the Public and contractors.
Legal liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	Low 1	Potential reputational and financial risk.	Parish Clerk clarifies the legal position on any new proposal put before the Council. Legal advice obtained and training undertaken when necessary Council exercises the General Power of Competence, where able.	Council minutes. Training records Council minutes	Parish Clerk attends training to keep up to date with legal changes. Council resolves to be eligible for the GPC as soon as the Parish Clerk can complete the CILCA qualification.
Legal liability	Accurate and timely reporting of the minutes	Medium 3	Inappropriate or no actions undertaken. Reputational risk. Non compliance with the Freedom of Information Act	Full council meets regularly and receives and approves minutes of meetings. Minutes made available to public via the Council website.	Council minutes (hard copy and via the web)	List of pending actions reported to Council, updated at each meeting
Legal liability	Proper document control	Medium 2	Loss of key data. Confidential data compromised. Council unable to function effectively	Any key legal documents kept in fireproof and locked cabinet. Computer backed up regularly.	Schedule of any documents contained in fireproof and lockable cabinet.	Review what documentation is stored in fireproof safe and locked office cupboards.

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Legal liability	Non compliance with transparency code	Low 1	Reputational	Training Quarterly publication	Website Council minutes	Parish Clerk and Deputy Clerk to complete Transparency Code training.
Cllr Conduct	Inappropriate actions by individual councillors	Low 1	Legal consequences if individuals purport to act for the Council without authority Reputation	Councillor training. Policies and procedures: including Standing Order, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Media Policy, Chairman's Protocol	Policies in place.	Reviewed annually. Councillors induction pack to be put in place and completed by all new Councillors. Training review with existing Councillors.
Cllr Propriety	Registers of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Low 1	Conflict of interest of councillors'. Corruption	NWLDC Monitoring Officer is responsible for maintaining list of interests, including gifts and hospitality of more than £25, of parish councillors and makes available for public inspection. Item on Annual Council Meeting Declarations of Interest taken and recorded at council meeting	Completed register of Interest forms available on PC website. Council minutes Council minutes On website	Councillors to update their Declaration of Interest as and when circumstances change. Councillors to report any gifts of more than £25. Review annually.

Date of last review – 20th June 2025

Next review: May 2026

RISK AREA	POTENTIAL RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKLIHOOD OF OCCURANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	STEPS TO MITIGATE RISK (CONTROL)	EVIDENCE	ACTION (AGREED IMPROVEMENTS)
Staff	Competence	Medium 3	Incorrect advice Inadequate records Financial loss Reputational risk	Recruit qualified and experienced staff Continuing professional development Membership of appropriate bodies (LRALC, SLCC, etc) Appraisals and monitoring	Recruitment procedure Evidence of qualifications Training records Appraisal records	Staff training programme to be agreed and actioned for all Council roles. Attendance at appropriate training events to be agreed, so knowledge is kept up to date.
Staff (see also Finance)	Fidelity	Low 1	Financial loss due to dishonesty	Insurance References on recruitment Internal monitoring No petty cash float	Insurance policy Financial Regulations Recruitment procedure Reporting of internal monitoring, Minutes	Annual review of Internal Monitoring Statement. New Council monitoring officer to be elected.
Staff	Continuity	High 4	Loss of records Lack of staff cover Adverse impact on services and reputation	Planned handover of duties on appointment of new staff Passwords and regular computer backup Staff structure/cover Available interim cover/advice	Membership of LRALC and SLCC for support Financial Regulations	Model contract now adopted. Regular backup and passwords copied to nominated councillor Staffing Committee to monitor and work with staff to ensure good working morale and conditions.