

## Annual Risk Assessment Report 2024-25

**(Reviewed and approved 7th March 2024)**

The Council is expected to carry out a systematic annual assessment of the potential risks it is exposed to and identify any actions it considers necessary to minimise those risks. Risk management is seen as being central to strategic management of any organisation and local councils are required to keep risk management under review throughout the year. It is also necessary to document this process.

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. In conducting this exercise the following plan was followed:

- Identify the area to be reviewed
- Identify what the risk may be
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings
- Review, assess and revise if required

### 1 Financial and Management Activities

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	High Medium Low	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
Business Continuity	Risk of Council not being able to undertake its business because of unexpected circumstance	L	Loss of revenue and business interruption is not an insured risk	
Precept	Adequacy of Precept	L	To determine the precept the Council regularly	Existing procedures adequate

	<p>Demand not submitted to Bedford Borough Council</p> <p>Precept not paid by Bedford Borough Council</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>receives budget update information and budget and precept setting are done at full parish council. At the precept meeting full information about previous year's accounts, current funds, projected position at year end and previous budgets are available. Council can map out likely income, regular costs and specific project costs for the coming year(s). Specific figures are applied to individual budget headings. A reserves policy is agreed. The precept is then calculated as an element of the budget. The demand is submitted by the RFO at the end of the budgeting process and is a minuted item at the January precept meeting.</p> <p>Bedford Borough Council has a statutory duty to collect the precept on behalf of the Council. The RFO informs the Council when the instalments are paid.</p>	
Reserves	<p>Inadequate reserves</p> <p>Inappropriate accumulation of reserves</p>	<p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The level and purpose of Council reserves are considered during the annual budgeting process. There are a number of Earmarked Reserves in place and more are added as required.</p>	<p>Reserves under continuous review.</p>
Financial Records	<p>Inadequate Records</p> <p>Financial Irregularities</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements for record keeping. Councillors have a responsibility to check financial records on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate. Review financial regulations annually prior to completion of Annual Return</p>
Bank and Banking	<p>Inadequate checks</p> <p>Bank mistakes</p> <p>Charges</p> <p>Loss of funds</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of statements. Mistakes by the bank are discovered via the monthly reconciliation procedure by the RFO. All banking arrangements are approved by full council. Existing arrangements include free banking. A councillor (who is not a cheque signatory) is annually appointed to act as internal auditor. He/she has access to the office</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate. Review the financial regulations and banking arrangements regularly and check mandates, especially after election.</p> <p>To investigate the level of funds protected in the event of the collapse of either bank.</p>

	Failure of bank	M	as requested. Current account bank statements are taken to the monthly PC meeting to enable inspection by councillors on a regular basis.  Accounts held with the Co-operative bank, Stafford Railway Building Society, Nationwide and Cambridge.	
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	Financial regulations require cash to be banked as soon as possible at the direction of the RFO. This risk is insured. Councillors should check bank statements on a regular basis.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the financial regulations annually and review the level of fidelity guarantee prior to submission of Annual Return.
Reporting and auditing	Information Communication  Non compliance	L  M	A financial report showing funds held and detailing individual accounts for approval is made by the RFO at each meeting of council. A financial report showing expenditure against budget is made monthly by the RFO. RFO is supplied with the latest version of "Governance and Accountability". An internal audit is conducted annually by a suitably qualified auditor appointed by the Council. The scope and remit of the internal audit is determined by the Council in its letter of appointment. A review of its effectiveness is agreed annually by full Council.	Existing communication procedures adequate should be reviewed annually.
Direct Costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods billed but not supplied Incorrect invoicing  Incorrect cheque Unpaid Invoices  Loss/misuse of stock	L L  L L  L	Financial regulations set out procedures for payment of expenses. RFO checks all invoices. All invoices are seen and checked by two parish councillors at a parish council meeting, cheques are signed by two parish councillors, a list of all accounts to be paid is approved at the meeting. Invoices are initialled by councillors and marked with cheque number. RFO pursues any unpaid invoices (eg advertising in newsletter), where possible payments are required in advance. Clerk maintains minimal necessary levels of stock.	Existing procedure adequate review financial regulations annually prior to submission of Annual Return.

Grants and Financial support payable	Power to pay Authorisation to pay	L L	All such payments go through the required process of council authorisation, approval and minuting. S137 payments are recorded as such in the minutes. If other powers are used a record of the relevant legislation is made.	Existing procedure adequate review financial regulations annually prior to submission of Annual Return.
Grants receivable	Receipt of grants	L	Any grants applied for should be approved by full council and if successful funds should be clearly marked within any financial reports.	All monies received to be clearly identified and receipts/invoices kept
Charges, rentals payable	Rental agreement for PC office	L	All charges and rentals are paid through the required process of council authorisation, approval and are minuted.	Existing procedure adequate review financial regulations annually prior to submission of Annual Return.
Charges, rentals receivable	Allotment Rents – failure to collect, inadequate rent level Allotment Key Deposits Allotment Deposits  Charges for Newsletter Advertisements	L L L  L	Both parties sign tenancy agreement and rent is collected in accordance with agreement. Allotments software is used to produce numbered rental demands and to record individual tenancy/payment details. All payments are entered into the Cash Book and receipts provided in accordance with Financial Regulations. Funds for repayment of deposits are shown in annual accounts as earmarked reserve. Reminder notices are issued but failure to pay results in termination of tenancy. Rental rates are agreed annually. Tenants are given six months notice of any increase. Therefore such an increase must be agreed by the full parish council no later than the March meeting of that year. Invoices are issued and all payments are entered into the Cash Book and receipts provided in accordance with the financial regulations. Where possible payment is made in advance and late/missed payments are	Existing procedure adequate review financial regulations annually prior to submission of Annual Return.  To be reviewed annually at the October Parish Council meeting to feed into the FAG Group budget meeting in Nov/Dec.

			pursued by the RFO. Advertising rates are agreed by full parish council.	
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly  Overspend on budget  Inability to access appropriate advice	L  L  L	Financial regulations set out procedure for awarding contracts and obtaining quotations for expenses.  Financial regulations do not permit RFO to spend outside the budget headings except in a genuine emergency (using delegated powers laid out in financial regulations). Decisions to amend the budget or vire amounts from different headings are taken by full Council. A contingency amount is included in the Budget. Maintain subscriptions to SLCC and BAT&PC, NSALG.	Existing procedure is adequate. Review financial regulations regularly but at least once per financial year for auditing purposes.
Salaries and payroll costs	Salary paid incorrectly False employee NI and PAYE contributions not made Incorrect NI and PAYE contributions made	L	Payroll service has been outsourced to Pam Anthony. Monthly payslips are posted to all employees and a monthly invoice sent to the Parish Council– this is paid by Direct Debit. Pam Anthony files HMRC returns. Payroll includes NI, PAYE and LGPS contributions.	These arrangements safeguard the Council further against fraud. Review financial regulations regularly but at least once per financial year for auditing purposes.
Employees	Loss of key personnel        Poor performance by staff	M       M	Council should maintain good practice and follow employment guidelines issued by NALC. BATPC subscription provides support with staffing matters. Advertise immediately for new staff and request cover from existing staff member if appropriate. Grievance procedures and anti-bullying and harassment policy are in place. Clerk/Assistant Clerk familiarise themselves with Computer Software for Allotments and Accounts.  Council must undertake annual performance appraisal of Clerk. Clerk undertakes annual performance review of litter picker	Personnel Working Group (3 councillors) deals with any HR issues.

	Fraud/Dishonesty by staff Actions undertaken by staff (includes libel and slander)	M M	The Council is insured against these risks. Fidelity Guarantee under insurance is reviewed annually. Training and appropriate reference materials are provided to the Staff. Complaints procedure has been adopted by Council. Risk of personal accident to staff is an insured risk. Health and Safety Policy has been adopted. Lone Worker Policy has been adopted	Review Fidelity Guarantee insurance annually prior to completion of Annual Return All other policies reviewed annually.
	Health and Safety	M		
Councillors	Actions taken by Councillors	L	Good Councillor Guide and local training is provided to all new councillors after elections. Statement of training intent has been adopted.	The General Power has replaced the Power of Well-being (provided under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000).
	Councillor Allowances Councillor expenses	L L	No allowances are paid. Councillor expenses are paid in accordance with Financial Regulations and reviewed regularly.	
Members Interests	Conflict of Interests	M	Declaration of interests is an agenda item at all meetings. Written guidance is provided on election/co-option. Councillors are made aware that they are responsible for their own declarations of interest and requesting dispensations.	An annual reminder is issued to members at the time of the AGM.
	Members Register not kept up to date	M		
Elections	Risk of costs	M	The parish council maintains an election reserve and the decision is take when the budget is reviewed as to whether to add to that reserve.	
VAT	Reclaiming of VAT Charging of VAT	L L	The Council has financial regulations which set out requirements.	Clerk attends relevant courses to update on current requirements.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	Clerk is trained in legal powers and powers are identified and minuted when council makes decisions.	
Notices and	Accuracy and legality	L	Notices, agendas and minutes are produced in	

Agendas Minutes Statutory Documents Meetings	Business conduct	M	the prescribed form by the Clerk and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved at next meeting NALC Model Standing Orders have been adopted and are regularly reviewed. The Chairman and all Councillors are issued with copies which include guidance for the Chairman. At the AGM committee structure and membership is reviewed.	Formal terms of reference for working groups have been adopted and are reviewed annually.
Insurance	Adequacy  Cost  Non compliance  Failure of Insurer	L  L  L  L	An annual review of insurance is undertaken prior to renewal and alternative quotes obtained and assessed by Council. Adequate Employer and Public Liability insurance are statutory requirements and levels are reviewed regularly. Premium is paid on time through usual financial procedures. No other specific compliance requirements obtain on current policy. Insurers advised if business activity changes, eg appointment of additional staff. Annual review includes consideration of robustness of insurance provider.	The insurance cover is amended whenever new items are purchased or circumstances change.  The current long term contract expires August 2018.
Data Protection Act	Non compliance	L	Council is registered and pays annual fee. Clerk is nominated person. Officers are aware of relevant legislation. The PC also has a policy	Reviewed annually
Freedom of Information Act	Non compliance	M	Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's publication scheme. A guide to information published by Brickhill PC is published on the website. The PC also has a policy.	Review annually.

## 2 Physical Spaces and Equipment

Created by Sue Bottoms

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	Health and Safety		and gates are inspected regularly by the Clerk. Gaps in the fence are repaired. Anti-vandal paint has been used on the gates to deter intruders. Advice on crime prevention is obtained from the Brickhill Community Policing Team. Gates are kept locked and tenants issued with a key which is returnable on completion of the tenancy. Security keys are used. Tenants Handbook includes requirement to keep gate locked at all times and handbook is issued to all tenants. Gates bear signs reminding tenants to keep the gates locked. Handbook includes guidance on personal health and safety and on use of poisons, chemicals, bonfires and vehicles on the site. Tenancy agreement requires tenants to comply with rules in handbook. A risk assessment has been produced The use of barbed wire on tenants' plots is prohibited. Keep site in current condition, maintaining vigilance with untidy plots and preventing accumulation of debris. Monitor water usage half yearly. A reserve fund for allotment maintenance has been established and is included as a separate heading in the annual budgeting process. Present reserves are inadequate to permit re-fencing of the site which will be necessary in the medium term. Allotment is regularly inspected for signs of vermin and appropriately qualified and insured pest control is authorised by Council in accordance with financial regulations.	follow guidance in allotments handbook when visiting the site.
	Increasing maintenance costs	M		Keep reserves under continual review.
	Pest Control – cost, H&S	M		
Notice boards	Loss or damage Maintenance Public liability	M L L	Notice boards are vandal resistant and insured against criminal damage. Notice boards are inspected regularly. Public liability insurance is in place.	Review insurance levels annually as a minimum.

Meeting Locations	Adequacy Health and Safety Expense	L L L	Public meeting locations comply with Disability Discrimination Act, are fully open to the public and the premises are considered to be adequate for Health and Safety and the comfort of staff, councillors and public. Hall hire is included as a separate budget heading and is reviewed annually.	Review choice of premises regularly
Office Location	Adequacy Health and Safety Loss of current office space Cost of office space	L L M M	Office location is considered to be adequate for health and safety and for the comfort of staff and visitors, If the current location became unavailable it would be difficult to find comparable cost effective office space with equivalent facilities within the parish.	
Council records Paper	Loss through theft/fire/damage	L	Minutes, policies and procedures etc are on the website. Paper records are stored in the Parish Council office at the Community Centre and kept in locked filing cabinets or locked cupboards (not fireproof). Office is kept locked when not in use. Records include minute book, correspondence, personnel and financial records, maps and deeds, tenancy agreements and archives of allotment and planning documents.	
Council records Electronic	Loss through theft/fire/damage	L	Electronic records are backed up automatically on a daily basis to an alternative drive. Weekly backups to an external hard drive are also undertaken by staff and is then taken home by the Clerk/Assistant Clerk. Access to computer is by password.	
Waveney Green	Loss of Assets	L	Play Area equipment is insured	
Play Areas Footpaths	Health and Safety	M	The Clerk does a weekly play areas inspection, keeps a written record and takes appropriate	Staff have undertaken relevant play area inspection

Trees		M  M	<p>action should any problems be identified. Outsourced annual play area inspections including separate risk assessment.</p> <p>Footpaths are inspected regularly and act in a timely manner to all reports of damage or pathway becoming in poor repair</p> <p>Carry out a detailed survey of all the trees on the site which will identify any immediate works required. As part of a regular inspection of the Green the trees will be inspected for any damaged branches or overhanging branches.</p>	<p>training</p> <p>Tree maintenance work is undertaken as required and will be monitored regularly as part of ongoing site inspections by staff</p>	
Brickhill Centre	Community	Loss of Assets	M	<p>Ensure building is adequately insured and provision made in Brickhill Community Association budget for this expense</p>	<p>Note: the buildings insurance is paid for by Beds BC and it is reimbursed by Brickhill Community Association.</p>
		Health and Safety	M	<p>Ensure all building health and safety checks are in place and a calendar of inspection dates is maintained using approved companies.</p>	<p>Community Centre is managed by Brickhill Community Association thereby reducing the element of risk to the council and information is passes back to Brickhill Parish Council.</p>