



Birtley Parish Council Risk Management Policy & Risk Assessment

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Parish Council's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully implement its strategies and services.

Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, assessed and controlled. It is a key element of the council's governance framework.

The Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk, with the Chair shall prepare, for approval by the Parish council, a risk management policy and assessment in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements, shall be reviewed by the Parish Council annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk, with the Chair, shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

This policy has been produced to enable Birtley Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and to satisfy itself that it has adequate arrangements in place to minimise them. The Parish Council recognises that some risks can never be totally eliminated. However, it has put in place a strategy that provides a structured and systematic approach to minimising risks that may affect the council.

In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

- Identify the hazard or activity to be reviewed.
- Identify what risks may exist or arise.
- Evaluate and describe the management and control of the risks and record findings.
- Review, assess and revise if required.

The council has broken down the risks it faces into three categories - Financial, Operational Management and Physical Equipment or Assets. Each of these categories is considered in detail over the following pages; the risks are identified and described together with an evaluation of their significance to the organization (High, Medium or Low) and arrangements are described for how the council proposes to manage or control the risk to what it considers to be a satisfactory level.

This policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on

Next review due in December 2027.

Signed by

Chair of Birtley Parish Council

FINANCIAL				
Topic	Risk	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business Continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	L	There is a Business Continuity Plan in place. Loss of Clerk or Loss of Council papers/electronic records. All significant council records are stored remotely with access available to the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair.	Review plan when necessary. Appropriate back-up arrangements in place.
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	The Council regularly receives budget updates at each meeting throughout the year.	Existing procedures adequate
	Requirements not submitted to District Council.	L	At meetings in the new year specific figures are allocated to budget headings for the following year, the total of which informs the precept amount to be requested from the Parish Council by the Clerk.	
	Amount not received from District Council	L	The Clerk informs Council when precept income is received.	
Financial Records	Inadequate records	L	The Council follows Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for reporting financial information to the council as a part of bimonthly Council meetings	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.
	Financial irregularities	L	These procedures are designed to prevent fraud and irregularities.	

Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L	The Council's Financial Regulations set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Clerk reconciles the bank accounts monthly to ensure transactions are correctly reflected in the financial information presented to the council.	Existing procedures adequate. Review Financial Regulations annually. Review bank signatory list after AGM or an election. Reconcile accounts and bank statements monthly.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for the handling of cash. No petty cash or float is held by any staff or councillor.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations annually.

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Topic	Risk	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Value for Money Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L L	Financial Regulations specify the procedures for procuring goods and services. If problems are encountered with a contract or a service, the Clerk would investigate, check the relevant circumstances and report to Council.	Existing procedures, contained within Financial Regulations, are adequate.
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly. Wrong deductions of NI or Tax. Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue.	L L L	The Parish Council has one employee, the Clerk. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Joint National Council and any changes implemented. The annual increase is included in the budget setting, if known, else estimated using available data. Tax and NI is calculated by external accountants. Payments to HMRC are made quarterly (where necessary) in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Existing systems include adequate controls.
Employees	Loss of key personnel (Clerk) Fraud by staff Actions undertaken by staff	L L L	The Clerk post would be advertised widely with arrangements to temporarily cover Clerk responsibilities until new Clerk in post. The council carries Fidelity Guarantee insurance with regard to fraud or staff actions. The Clerk and councillors are provided with access to relevant training, reference books and legal advice as required to undertake the role.	Existing procedure adequate. Retain membership of the NALC. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly. Existing procedures adequate.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L	No allowances are paid to Parish Councillors	No procedure required

Election costs	Financial risk to the council of an election.	L	The County Council does not charge for the statutory four-yearly elections to the parish council. If called for, a By-Election could be budgeted for through reserves.	Councillors to monitor budget and reserves throughout the year to ensure adequate funding is available if necessary.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the required processes.	Existing procedure adequate.
Annual Returns	Submit within time limits.	L	Employer's Annual Return is completed by external accountants and submitted online to HMRC within the prescribed timeframe. Annual Audit Return is completed and submitted to internal audit before being approved by the Parish Council and prior to forwarding to the external auditor within the required timeframe.	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Council to be resolved and minuted at full Parish Council Meetings.	RFO/Clerk and Councillors have a duty to implement Standing Orders and Financial Regs.
Minutes/Agendas/Notices Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed form by the Clerk and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are accessible to the public in compliance with the legal requirements.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Business conduct	L	Business conducted at Council meetings is managed lawfully by the Chair in accordance with Standing Orders and with the advice and guidance of the Clerk.	Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.

Members interests	Conflict of interest	L	The declaration of interests by members at meetings is a standing item to remind Councillors of their duty. Register of Members Interest forms should be reviewed annually by Councillors at the AGM.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Register of Members interests	M		Members are responsible for updating the Register.
Insurance	Adequacy	L	An annual review is undertaken (at time of policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements. Employers/ee liability insurance is a necessity. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Cost	L		Review insurance provision annually.
	Compliance	L		Review of compliance.
	Fidelity Guarantee	M		
Data protection	Policy	L	The Council has a policy in place to cover GDPR.	Review GDPR policy annually.
Freedom of Information Act	Policy	L	The Council has an Information Publication Scheme in place. Ensure the Clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work. (The Council can request a fee if the work will take more than 15 hours.)	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act.
	Provision	M		

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS

Topic	Risk	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Assets	Loss or Damage. Risk/damage to third parties/property.	L L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance, provision, storage and maintenance purposes.	Existing procedure adequate. Keep under review during year.
Play Area	Risk/damage/injury to third parties.	M	A RoSPA certified inspector inspects the play area annually; recommendations for safety improvement are carried out to alleviate risks. The responsibility of the play areas lies with	Existing procedure adequate.

			separate committees and is not the responsibility of the Parish Council. The PC assist, where possible towards the financial upkeep of the areas.	
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities Risk to third parties	L L	All assets owned by the Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the procedures agreed by the Council. All assets are insured and reviewed annually. The asset register is reviewed through the annual audit process.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure timely inspections carried out.
Notice boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	Parish Council notice boards in all locations have insurance cover and are inspected regularly and reported back to the Parish Council. Any essential repairs/maintenance will be authorised by the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is responsible for a variety of street furniture around the village as detailed in the Asset Register. All locations have insurance cover and are inspected regularly and reported back to the Council. Any essential repairs/maintenance will be authorised by the Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure Asset Register is updated when changes are made.
Meeting location	Adequacy Health & Safety	L M	The Parish Council Meetings are held at various Village Halls which are considered to be adequate for all who attend from both a Health and Safety and comfort perspective. The location is published on the council website.	Existing locations adequate.

Council records - paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L M L	Any Parish Council paper records are stored with the Parish Clerk or at the County Council's archive site in Woodhorn. NE63. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision adequate.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: theft, fire, damage Corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are password protected and stored on the Clerk's laptop computer and backed up on the cloud. Annual computer maintenance is carried out.	The Parish Council Chair and Vice-Chair also have access to the cloud storage facility.