

NEWTON & BIGGIN PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF RISK - February 2024

This document has been produced to enable Newton & Biggin 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:

- 1 Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- 2 Identify what the risk may be.
- 3 Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- 4 Review, assess and revise if required.

H - High
M - Medium
L - Low

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT				
SUBJECT	RISK	H/M/L	MANAGEMENT / CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
Precept	Adequacy of Precept	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Council regularly receives budget update information. At the precept meeting Council receives a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year. With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Rugby Borough Council.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Requirements not submitted to RBC	L	The Clerk submits the precept to RBC and copies the Chair into the e-mail. The Clerk requests acknowledgement that the request has been received and confirms that RBC has received the precept request.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Amount not received	L	The clerk reports back to the council when the instalments of the precept are received (May and September) under the statement of accounts item of the agenda.	<i>Low risk</i> <i>Council maintains a 7 month general reserve</i>
Financial records	Inadequate records	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. The clerk reports to every council meeting with a statement of accounts and bank reconciliation. Bank reconciliation is checked and approved by the CLr who leads financial controls.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Financial Irregularities	L	Internal and external audits are carried out annually in addition to the clerk reporting to every council meeting with a statement of accounts and bank reconciliation. Bank reconciliation is checked and approved by the CLr who leads financial controls.	<i>Low risk</i>
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The clerk checks the monthly bank statement against actual income and expenditure. The clerk reports to every council meeting with a statement of accounts and bank reconciliation. Internet banking is in place for the Clerk and all councillors. Payment controls have been approved and set up. Bank signatories are up to date. Cheques are rarely used but must be signed by two councillors.	<i>Now low risk.</i> <i>Since the 2023 General Assessment of Risk, the Council has put in place internet banking payment controls.</i> <i>A full review of all bank signatories was also undertaken.</i>
	Bank errors	L	Any discrepancies / errors made by the bank would be challenged by the clerk when they become apparent and the clerk would report any such errors and the action taken to rectify the error to the council. Payments controls approved and in place for internet banking to reduce risk of errors.	<i>Now low risk.</i> <i>Since the 2023 General Assessment of Risk, the Council has put in place internet banking payment controls, reducing the risk of errors.</i>
Cash	Loss through theft / dishonesty	L	No petty cash / float is held	<i>Low risk</i> <i>N/A</i>

VAT	Reclaiming	L	Vat is to be reclaimed on a quarterly basis unless under £100, the minimum amount that may be claimed. Receipt of VAT refund reported to the Council.	<i>Low risk</i>
Reporting and auditing	Information communication	L	Financial reporting is a monthly agenda item. Members have the opportunity to discuss, question, review financial matters during the monthly Parish Council meeting.	<i>Low risk</i>
Grants	Receipt of grants	L	The Council does apply for one-off grants to help fund larger projects. Grant applications/procedures are followed, and decisions shared with members as and when relevant.	<i>Low risk</i> <i>Regularly review relevant information for grant opportunities</i>
Grants and support payable	Power / Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure must adhere to the Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using S137 powers of expenditure. S137 expenditure is tracked and coded in Scribe accounts software accordingly.	<i>Low risk</i>
Best value accountability	Work awarded incorrectly	L	Financial Regulations followed. Quotations/estimates obtained where required.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Overspend on services.	L	If a problem is encountered with a contract, the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation / tender, research the problem and report to the council.	<i>Low risk</i> <i>Where possible we let fixed price contracts</i>
Salaries and assoc. costs	Salary paid.	L	Contract of Employment in place for all employees. Annual review of salaries in line with NALC pay scales and approved pay awards. Clerk's timesheet is approved by the Chair. Payroll services are outsourced.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Tax/NI to Inland Revenue.	L	HM Revenue and Customs REAL TIME procedures followed for NI and PAYE	<i>Low risk</i>
Employees	Fraud by staff	L	Finance reports presented to the Council. End of Year information reported / internal and external audit controls. Payments controls approved and in place for internet banking to reduce risk of fraud.	<i>Now low risk.</i> <i>Since the 2023 General Assessment of Risk, the Council has put in place internet banking payment controls, significantly reducing the risk of fraud.</i>
	Competence	L	Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference material, access to assistance and legal advice.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Health and safety	L	All employees to be provided adequate direction and safety equipment needed to undertake their roles	<i>Low risk</i>
External Audit Annual Return	Submit financial documentation as required within time limits	L	External Audit Annual Return (AGAR) completed and signed by the Council, submitted to internal auditor for completion and relevant checks. The Clerk to ensure that further requests from the External Auditor are responded to promptly and reported to the Full Council.	<i>Low risk</i>
Insurance	Adequacy, cost, compliance and Fidelity Guarantee	L	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements to include: Employers and Employee liabilities Fidelity Public Liability Assets and equipment	<i>Low risk</i>

LIABILITY				
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved/approved at full Council Meetings. Control presented through monthly finance reports	Low risk
Minutes /agendas / notices / statutory documents	Accuracy and legality relating to official business documentation	L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are consecutively numbered, signed and dated by the chair. Agenda displayed according to legal requirements.	Low risk
	Business Conduct	L	Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Low risk
Members interests	Conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest by members at Council meetings.	Low risk
	Register of members interests	L	Register of members interests' forms reviewed regularly and passed on to the local authority.	Low risk
Data protection	Policy provision	L	The Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office	Low risk

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS				
Assets	Loss or damage Risk / damage to third party property	L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision and Annual Return	
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities. Risk to third parties.	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly inspected, reviewed, and maintained. (At least quarterly as per Health and Safety policy) All repairs and relevant expenditure relating to repairs are actioned / authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. Assets are insured.	Low risk Quarterly inspections
Meeting locations	Adequacy	L	The Parish Council meeting is held in a venue considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members, and the general public.	Low risk No alternative location at Coton
	Health & Safety	L	The venue is compliant with Disability Laws.	Low risk
Council records – paper	Loss through: Theft Fire Damage	L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, records such as insurance, invoices and banking documents. All documents are kept secure.	Low risk
Council records – electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire damage or corruption of computer	L	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Council laptop held with the Clerk/RFO at their home. All documents are stored onto One Drive - a cloud-based service allowing documents to be accessed from any device.	Low risk Daily back -up to One Drive, and quarterly back up to external hard drive.
Five Arches Wildlife Site	Risk to third parties	L	Rugby Borough Council are responsible for the Five Arches site.	Low risk There is also no requirement for the Parish Council to inspect trees in the parish, as they are not responsible for them. (Ref WALC.)

BUSINESS CONTINUITY				
Business Continuity	Incapacity of Clerk	L	Designate a person to temporarily act as Clerk in an emergency.	<i>Low risk Use WALC locum services provided or designate a Cllr</i>
	Resignation of the Clerk	L	Process to be in place, job description, person specification in place (advice from WALC)	<i>Low risk</i>
	Loss or theft of records	L	All old copies of Minutes prior to electronic to be deposited with the County Records. All minutes from 2013 are held on the Council's website All records are backed up onto One Drive.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Failure to retain or secure the necessary number of Members for a Council	L	Maintain an up-to-date attendance register. Advertise for an election immediately a vacancy exists. Co-opt Members where no election held.	<i>Low risk</i>
	Pandemic	L	Make arrangements to delegate authority to the Clerk to make decisions on behalf of Council, in the event that Council cannot meet in person, to ensure that the business of the Council may continue uninterrupted. This would be in the event that no legislation has been passed by Government to hold meetings remotely using video conferencing.	<i>Low risk</i>

OTHER				
Other	Decisions made by the Council that do not enjoy general community support.	L	All decisions made by the Council are to be made at public meetings where there is an open session for residents to speak (unless a confidential agenda item). The Council are aware of their legal powers when making decisions. Where possible, the community should be engaged and opinions sought.	<i>Low risk The Parish Council is also in the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan, seeking support from the community. Final decision would be made via a referendum.</i>
	Reputational damage arising from the actions or inactions of the Council.	L	All actions of the Council to be documented with a clear audit trail. All Councillors to follow the agreed Code of Conduct for Councillors. Any areas for improvement identified by internal or external auditors are reviewed by the Council and an action plan put in place to address.	<i>Low risk The Parish Council is also in the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan, seeking support from the community. Final decision would be made via a referendum.</i>

Format approved:

Date 25/01/2024
Minute Ref NPC24/01/0019

General Assessment of Risk Completed:

Reviewed by **Ian Davis - Chair and Rebecca Barry - Clerk**
Date **16/02/2024**

Results Reported to Council:

Date 28/03/2024
Minute Ref NPC24/03/0049