

YARNTON PARISH COUNCIL

This risk assessment was adopted on 21/1/2026 (Minute reference 205/2025-6.8.1) and will be reviewed annually.

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential inherent risks. The Parish Council, based on a recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

This document has been produced to enable Yarnton Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

| FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|----------------|
| Subject | Area of Risk | Likelihood (1-3) x Impact (1-3) | Management / Control of Risk | Action Required | Review Date |
| I. Insurance | a. General adequacy | (1 x 1) = 1 | The insurance arrangements are reviewed fully on a two-year basis with interim annual checking. Review of risk and adequacy of cover (loss / damage, public liability, consequential loss and fidelity guarantee) should be conducted annually. Full review of renewal costs currently annual. | Check limits annually and review full policy every three years. | Renewal 1 June |
| | b. Cost | (1 x 1) = 1 | | | |
| | c. Compliance | (1 x 1) = 1 | | | |
| | d. Public Liability (statutory) | (1 x 1) = 1 | Insurance in place via Zurich. Refer to policy for detail. | | |

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| | e. Employers Liability (statutory) | (1 x 1) = 1 | Insurance in place via Zurich. Refer to policy for detail. | | |
| | f. Money | (1 x 1) = 1 | | | |
| | g. Fidelity Guarantee | (1 x 2) = 2 | | | |
| | h. Property | (2 x 2) = 4 | | | |
| | i. Libel and Slander | (1 x 2) = 2 | | Consider an Excess Reserve | |
| | j. Personal Accident | (1 x 2) = 2 | | | |

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| | k. Excess | (1 x 1) = 1 | Reserves set aside to be used in case of claim. | | |
| 2. Precept | a. Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its statutory duties | (1 x 2) = 2 | <p>To determine the precept amount required, the Council regularly receives budget update information.</p> <p>At the precept meeting Council receives a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. 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. Taking into account the reserves, income and expenditure, the Council resolves to agree the precept amount to be requested from Cherwell District Council. The figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing.</p> <p>The Clerk informs the Council when the monies are received.</p> | <p>Review starting in December with budget process.</p> <p>Confirm precept requirement in January</p> | December / January |
| 3. Budget Provision and Reserves | b. Insufficient available funds | (1 x 2) = 2 | A full budget needs to be submitted prior to the Precept request. This | | December / January |

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| | | | should include funds placed in reserve for future projects, a contingency fund and six months' running costs. | | |
| 4. Best Value Accountability | c. Work awarded incorrectly | (1 x 3) = 3 | Parish Council practice would be to seek, if possible, more than one quotation for any substantial work undertaken. For major work competitive tenders must be sought. If problems encountered with a contract, the Clerk would investigate the situation and report to the Council. | Procedure in Financial Regulations | Ongoing |
| | d. Overspend on services | (1 x 2) = 2 | | Procedure in Financial Regulations | Ongoing |
| 5. Contracts and contractors | a. Maintenance contractors | (1 x 2) = 2 | Standing orders for award of contracts and capital expenditure. Initial contracts awarded for 12 months. Subject to satisfactory performance, subsequent contracts are for two years. | Report on performance and review when appropriate | Ongoing |
| 6. Payroll and Salary | a. HMRC RTI Information – submit within time limits | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Clerk's salary payment should be entered on the HMRC PAYE Tools software and uploaded to HMRC on a monthly basis by the Payroll provider. Clerk adds submission date on Scribe Accounts for inspection at monthly PC meeting. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |

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| | b. HMRC End of Year Submission / P60 | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council must complete the End of Year Submission online within | Existing procedure adequate. | April |
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| | – submit within time limits | | the HMRC timeframe. Councillor Responsible for Internal Financial Control to make manual checks. | | |
| | c. Salary paid incorrectly | (1 x 1) = 1 | Salary agreed once NALC briefing has been published; paid by Standing Order. Councillors who authorise payments to via Unity to check salary payment amounts in Scribe and payroll upload sheet. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| | d. Unpaid tax to HMRC | (1 x 2) = 2 | Payment information to be provided by payroll provider. Quarterly payment by BACS. Councillor Responsible for internal financial Control to include in checks. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| 7. Employees | a. Fraud by staff | (1 x 2) = 2 | Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance adhered to with regards to fraud. | Existing procedure adequate | |
| | b. Health and safety | (1 x 2) = 2 | All employees to be provided adequate direction, training and safety equipment needed to undertake their role. | Monitor health and safety requirements and insurance annually | |
| | c. Clerk resignation / sickness | (1 x 2) = 2 | Locum Clerk to be employed via local SLCC group if necessary. | Existing procedure adequate | Ad-hoc |

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| 8. Bank and Banking | a. Inadequate checks | (1 x 2) = 2 | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements. | Financial Regulations up to date | |
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| | | | | | revised Regulations be issued by NALC) |
| | b. Bank mistakes | (1 x 1) = 1 | Reconciliation is monthly to pick up on any mistakes. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| | c. Payment mistakes | (1 x 1) = 1 | <p>Online payments should follow the agreed online payment procedure.</p> <p>The Clerk to provide digital copies of all invoices via Scribe Accounts together with a payment schedule for the meeting. Councillor authorisers to check all details prior to authorising payments.</p> | <p>Existing procedure adequate</p> <p>Online Payment Procedure reviewed on a bi-annual basis</p> | Bi-annually |
| | d. Signatories | (1 x 1) = 1 | To ensure that payments can be made in a timely manner, Council to confirm bank signatories and electronic banking authorisers are up to date. There should be at least three, preferably four Councillors capable of authorising online payments. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually in May |

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| | e. Credit references | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Bank performs credit references on signatories. | Existing procedure adequate | Review when adding a new signatory |
| | f. Debit Card Use | (1 x 1) = 1 | Debit Card Use Policy adopted. | Review every two years. | November 2025 |
| | g. Non-performance / delivery of third parties | (1 x 1) = 1 | Avoid pre-payments wherever possible. Clerk to vet suppliers thoroughly. | Existing procedure adequate | |
| 9. Financial reporting | a. Information communication | (1 x 1) = 1 | Financial information is a regular, monthly, agenda item (Finance Report) and discussed / reviewed and approved at each meeting. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| 10. | b. Annual accounts | (1 x 1) = 1 | Accounts to be closed at Council Year End 31 March and final Statement submitted to April / May Parish Council meeting for scrutiny and agreement. Clerk / RFO and Chairman to sign off. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually in May |
| 11. Financial Records | a. Inadequate records | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually in December (or sooner should the revised Regulations be issued by NALC) |
| | b. Financial irregularities | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council should have a Councillor responsible for Internal Control who inspects the finance records regularly. Any irregularities should be identified on inspection. | Existing procedure adequate | Appointed in May. Checks four times a year. |

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| 12. Grants | a. Receipt of grant | (1 x 1) = 1 | All receipts of grants to be recorded at the following meeting. Clerk to ensure that the Grass Cutting Grant is received by BACS by August and to chase OCC if not received. | Review annually | Ad hoc |
| | b. Payment of Grants and Power to pay using S137 | (1 x 1) = 1 | Ensure that grants are acceptable to pay under General Power of Competence. All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuting and listing accordingly. | Existing procedure adequate | |
| 13. Charges – rents receivable | a. Payment of rents | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Parish Council should receive a peppercorn rent of £1 from the PFC. Ensure that the invoice is sent out annually. | Existing procedure adequate. | Annually in April |
| 14. VAT | a. Reclaiming | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council will make at least one reclaim using the 126 form annually after the close of the year end. Provided the reclaim is for more than one calendar month and is over £100 interim claims may be made. The order must have been placed by the Council, the invoice made out to the Council and the payment made from Council funds. | Existing procedure adequate | At least annually in April |

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| | b. Charging | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council is not currently registered for VAT. | | |
| 15. Audit | a. Annual Return - complete and publish within time limits | (1 x 1) = 1 | External Audit Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to be completed and signed by the Internal Auditor and then completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk / RFO at a full Council meeting before 30 June and published on the website. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually before 30 June |

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| | b. Public inspection of documents | (1 x 1) = 1 | By appointment only, at the Clerk's office or other convenient public place. For the safety of the Clerk, the public are welcome to inspect documents, but with a Councillor present. Annual Inspection Notice must cover the first 10 working days of July. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually – inspection dates to be agreed at full Council. |
| | c. Internal Audit | (1 x 1) = 1 | Appoint an independent Internal Auditor. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually in July |
| | d. Review of Effectiveness of Audit | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council must review its requirements of the internal Audit including scope, independence, competence, relationships and planning following the completion of the Internal Audit. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually following receipt of the Internal Audit no later than August. |
| 16. Legal Powers | a. Illegal activity or payments | (1 x 1) = 1 | All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved at full Council Meetings, including reference to the power used under the Finance section of Agenda and Finance Report. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| 17. Minutes / agenda / Notices and | a. Accuracy and legality | (1 x 1) = 1 | Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk and adhere to the legal | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |

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| Statutory Documents | | | <p>requirements including publishing on the Agenda and Minutes section of the Parish Council website www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk</p> <p>While not a requirement of Councils over £25,000, draft Minutes are published within one month of the meeting, circulated in advance of the next meeting, and approved and signed by the Chair of the meeting at the full Council meeting.</p> | | |
| | b. Standing Orders | (1 x 1) = 1 | Reviewed and updated annually | | January |
| | c. Financial Regulations | (1 x 1) = 1 | Reviewed and updated annually | | January |
| | d. Business conduct | (1 x 1) = 1 | <p>Agenda displayed according to legal requirements.</p> <p>Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chairman.</p> | Existing procedure adequate | Ongoing |

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| 18. Council Records | a. Paper | (1 x 2) = 2 | Loss through fire, theft, damage. The Parish Council records are stored at the office of the Clerk, in the locked, fireproof cabinets in the office and at the Oxfordshire Records Office. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records. | Damage (apart from fire or flood) and theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate. Ensure that minute records are archived in a timely manner. | Ongoing |
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| Subject | Area of Risk | Likelihood (1-3) x Impact (1-3) | Management / Control of Risk | Action Required | Review Date |
| | a. Electronic | (1 x 2) = 2 | The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Council's laptop in a Google Cloud held with the Clerk. The data is constantly backed up to both Googledrive in the Cloud and a physical backup is taken hourly to a separate removable SSD drive. Norton antivirus to be kept up-to- date. | Existing procedure adequate | Annually |
| 19. Data Protection | a. Policy provision | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioner. | Existing procedure adequate | December 2026 |
| | b. Data Protection Officer | | Legislation does not require a data protection officer. | Review if necessary | |
| | c. GDPR | (1 x 1) = 1 | Policies for Data Protection, Document Retention, Freedom of Information, Disclosure Log and Privacy Notice have been adopted and published. | Review bi-annually or sooner should legislation dictate | Data Protection: December 2026 FOI: December 2026 Logs: Annually April |
| 20. Freedom of Information and | a. Policy | (1 x 1) = 1 | The Council has a model publication scheme in place. | Existing procedure adequate | December 2026 |

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| Environmental Information Regulations | b. Provision | (1 x 2) = 2 | The Parish Council is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create a number of additional hours' work. | | |
| 21. Councillors | a. Losing a Councillor | (1 x 1) = 1 | When a vacancy arises there is a legal process to follow which leads to either a by-election or a co- option process. The more usual is a co-option which starts with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co- option vote at a Council meeting. The Council tries to draw members from around the Parish to make sure each area is represented. | Existing Vacancy Procedure adequate | May 2026 |
| | b. Losing more than five Councillors to make the Council inquorate | (1 x 3) = 3 | If there are more than four vacancies at any one time, the Council becomes inquorate and the District Council will take over the running of the Council (at the Parish's expense). | Procedures of Cherwell District Council are adequate | Not applicable |
| 22. Election Costs | a. Risk of an election cost | (1 x 2) = 2 | Risk is higher in an election year. The cost of a bi-election is estimated to be approximately £2,500. A need to build up reserve. Sufficient reserves are held to cover this. | Existing procedure is adequate | Annually in conjunction with CDC. |

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| 23. Members' Interests and Code of Conduct | a. Conflict of interests | (1 x 1) = 1 | Declarations of interest by members at Council meetings. Legally Councillors need only declare 'pecuniary interests', but many choose to declare other interests and withdraw from discussion if necessary. All interests are recorded. | Existing procedure adequate | Monthly |
| | b. Code of Conduct | (1 x 1) = 1 | Code issued by CDC and adopted by YPC. It is issued to each Councillor on election to Office. | Existing procedure adequate. | On receipt of new guidance from CDC |
| | c. Register of members' interests | (1 x 1) = 1 | Councillors must complete a form on election which must be sent to CDC for publication on their website. Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their own register of members interests is kept up to date. | Review Annually | Councillors |
| 24. Council Meetings | a. Recording of meetings | (1 x 1) = 1 | While it is legal for recordings to be made of meetings, out of courtesy, and in accordance with the Recording of Meetings Policy, members of the public are requested to inform the Chairman if they wish to record the meeting. The Parish Council will also make a recording if necessary. | Existing procedure adequate | Chairman |

Risk Prioritisation

The table below is recommended in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide

Risk prioritisation is an assessment of the severity of impact if something were to happen and how likely it is to happen Likelihood x Impact = Risk Priority

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|------------|---------------|------------|----------|--------|
| How Likely | Highly likely | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| | Possible | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | Negligible | Moderate | Severe |
| | Impact | | | |

Taken from the JPAG 2021 from Section 5.97 Addressing risks:

Risk is unavoidable, and every organisation needs to take action to manage risk in a way which it can justify to a level which is tolerable. The response to risk, which is initiated within the organisation, is called 'internal control' and may involve one or more of the following standard responses:

- Tolerate the risk - for risks where the downside is containable with appropriate contingency plans; for some where the possible controls cannot be justified (e.g. because they would be disproportionate); and for unavoidable risks, e.g. terrorism.
- Treat the risk - a common response which can mean imposing controls so that the organisation can continue to operate; or setting up prevention techniques.
- Transfer the risk – buying in a service from a specialist external body or taking out insurance. Some risks cannot be transferred, especially reputational risk.
- Terminate the activity giving rise to the risk - it may be best to stop (or not to start) activities which involve intolerable risks or those where no response can bring the risk to a tolerable level.

Areas where there may be scope to use insurance to help manage risk include the following:

- The protection of physical assets owned by the authority – buildings, furniture, equipment, etc. (loss or damage).
- The risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the authority providing services or amenities to the public (public liability).
- The risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party (consequential loss).
- Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty (fidelity guarantee).
- Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability).

The limited nature of internal resources in most authorities means that those wishing to provide services often buy them in from specialist external

bodies. Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk include the following:

- Security for vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment.
- Maintenance for vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment.
- The provision of services being carried out under agency/partnership agreements with principal authorities.
- Banking arrangements, including borrowing or lending.
- Ad hoc provision of amenities/ facilities for events to local community groups.
- Markets management.
- Vehicle or equipment lease or hire.
- Trading units (leisure centres, playing fields, burial grounds, etc.).
- Professional services (planning, architects, accountancy, design, etc.).