

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council

Risk Register
April 2025

Contents

STRATEGIC RISK 1 CLOSURE OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN THE PARISH	1
STRATEGIC RISK 2 HS2	1
STRATEGIC RISK 3 STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN	2
FINANCIAL RISK 1 MISAPPROPRIATION OF COUNCIL FUNDS/FINANCIAL LOSS	2
FINANCIAL RISK 3 LACK OF FUNDS	3
FINANCIAL RISK 4 INADEQUATE INSURANCE COVER	3
GOVERNANCE RISK 1 FAILURE ON THE PART OF THE COUNCIL TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS	4
GOVERNANCE RISK 2 FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH GDPR/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION	4
OPERATIONAL RISK 1 DATA LOSS DUE TO IT FAILURE	5
OPERATIONAL RISK 2 DAMAGE TO/ACCIDENT GREENSIDE PLAY EQUIPMENT	5
OPERATIONAL RISK 3 LOSS OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR.....	5
OPERATIONAL RISK 4 LOSS OF COUNCIL WEBSITE.....	6
OPERATIONAL RISK 5 PARISH CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER ABSENCE.....	6
OPERATIONAL RISK 6 PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL ASSETS/VANDALISM	6
DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL	7

PREFACE

The Risk Register provides details of the strategic and operational risks faced by the Parish Council and the measures that are in place to limit their impact.

Assessment of risk

Risk is an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, will have an effect on the achievement of the Council's objectives. Risk management is the process by which the Council methodically addresses the risks associated with their work and the services they provide.

The focus of this Risk Register is to identify what can go wrong, put in place controls to minimise the likelihood of a risk event happening or to reduce its consequence.

Each risk has been assigned a score between 1 – 9 (1 = Low – 9 = High)

The risk assessment enables the Council to decide which risks it should pay most attention to when considering what measures to take to manage them.

Policy Statement

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employee, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses; to minimise uncertainty in achieving its aims and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision. The Parish Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.

Roles and Responsibilities

Councillors: risk management is seen as a key part of councillors' stewardship role and there is an expectation that councillors will lead and monitor the approach adopted through the approval of the Risk Management Strategy and thereafter by being involved in the assessment of risks associated with major projects.

Parish Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer: responsible for overseeing the implementation of the detail of the Risk Management Strategy:

- provide advice as to the legality of policy and service delivery choices;
- provide advice on the implications for service areas of the Council's aims and objectives;
- update the Council on the implications of new or revised legislation;
- report progress to the Council;
- assess and implement the Council's insurance requirements;
- assess the financial implications of strategic policy options;
- provide assistance and advice on budgetary planning and control;
- ensure that the financial information system delivers effective budgetary control.

Likelihood	Highly likely (3)	Medium (3)	High (6)	High (9)
	Possible (2)	Low (2)	Medium (4)	High (6)
	Unlikely (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)	Medium (3)
		Negligible (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe (3)
	Impact			

↓ = better than the last assessment

↑ = worst than the last assessment

↔ = No change

Strategic Risk 1 Closure of commercial premises in the parish	Responsibility Councillors/Clerk	Likelihood 3	Impact 3	Total Score 9 (High) ↑
	Consequence of Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closure of commercial premises in the parish resulting in the parish becoming less viable. Loss of Key Service Village status Significant increase in problems of rural isolation for residents of the parish Increased reliance on public transport links 			
Key Controls in Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open lines of communication with the businesses concerned Maintain dialogue with business Work with Yarnfield and Cold Meece Community Ltd Work with Staffordshire County Council to identify grant/business opportunities Asset of Community Value listing for the Labour in Vain. 				

Strategic Risk 2 HS2	Responsibility Councillors/clerk	Likelihood 2	Impact 3	Total Score = 6 (High) ↓
	Consequence of Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until disposal by the DfT of land acquired for HS2 is completed there is a risk that the construction of a modified version of HS2 will be approved. Leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive disruption to village life Travel arrangements to and from the parish severely limited resulting in delayed travel time for school, work, emergency services and other users that need to use Yarnfield Lane 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk of environmental disruption; noise, dust, due to construction work <p>Note: The Government announced on 4 October 2023 that HS2 Phase 2a and b had been cancelled. HS2 Ltd were instructed to work with the Department for Transport to develop a programme of activity to close down Phase 2a in a safe, respectful, orderly and efficient manner. It was also instructed to dispose of the land acquired by HS2 Ltd. The parish council is concerned that until the disposal of this land has been completed there is a significant risk to the parish and that this Strategic Risk, and its associated controls, should remain in place.</p>
	<p>Key Controls in Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with Stone Railway Campaign Group ● Work with neighbouring parish councils ● Work with HS2 contractors – to minimise risk to the parish ● Work with Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council to eliminate the risk to the parish

<p>Strategic Risk 3 Stafford Borough Council Local Plan</p>	Responsibility	Councillors/clerk	Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Total Score = 9 (High) ↔
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of up-to-date Local Plan leading to a "tilted balance" in planning decisions, meaning that planning permission is more likely to be granted unless there are compelling reasons to withhold it. ● Proliferation in the number of planning applications on sites not previously considered acceptable ● Loss of rural nature of the parish ● Increase through traffic in Yarnfield and Cold Meece ● Extensive disruption to village life ● Disruption to services 						
	Key Controls in Place						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan prioritised ● Review and comment on all planning applications ● Work with borough councillors and planning officers ● Support from Urban Vision Planning Consultants 						

<p>Financial Risk 1 Misappropriation of Council Funds/Financial loss</p>	Responsibility	Parish Clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ↔
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inability of council to perform its statutory functions ● Reputational risk to the parish council 						

	<p>Key Controls in Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking Arrangements and changes to banking services approved by the council and recorded in the minutes • Payment of invoices BACS using a 2 signature Bankline system • Monthly bank reconciliation – reported to the council • Accounts to be signed by the Chairperson at each meeting • Quarterly bank reconciliation signed by the lead councillor for finance • Annual scrutiny of all financial records by an internal auditor. • Annual auditors (internal and external) reports to council
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<p>Financial Risk 2 Lack of Funds</p>	Responsibility	Councillors	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to meet financial demands arising from unplanned activity • Loss of reputation • Failure to secure section 106 funding leading to inability to deliver the Greenside Playground project • Inability to respond quickly to demand 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual transfer of funds to reserve account to increase level of parish council reserves • Monthly finance report • Commitment accounting system in place to monitor financial expenditure against committed expenditure. • Half yearly review of budget • Annual budget set by council based on key priorities • Working with officers and councillors from Stafford Borough Council to secure s106 funding. 							

<p>Financial Risk 3 Inadequate Insurance Cover</p>	Responsibility	Parish Clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate cover • Council incurs liability not covered by insurance • Loss of reputation • Financial risk to the council 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of the insurance policy • Cover requirements review in the light of changes to the list register 							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel activities drawn to the attention of Clear Insurance Management and their advice taken. • Risk assessment of activity undertaken and reported to the council.
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Governance Risk 1 Failure on the part of the council to maintain standards	Responsibility Councillors/Clerk	Likelihood 1	Impact 2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇔
	Consequence of Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational risk to the parish council • Lack of transparency • Legal Action • Allegations of libel or slander • Internal/External audit compromised • Members personal risk 			
	Key Controls in Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain adequate internal controls/support for councillors • Adoption of the Stafford Borough Council Code of Conduct for Members • Regular reporting to councillors • Councillor training/ Good Councillor Guide • Parish Clerk CILCA qualified • Annual Accounting and Governance Review • Membership of National Association of Local Councils 			

Governance Risk 2 Failure to comply with GDPR/Freedom of Information	Responsibility Councillors/Clerk	Likelihood 1	Impact 1	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇔
	Consequence of Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational risk to the parish council • Lack of transparency • Legal Action 			
	Key Controls in Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate internal controls • Response systems in place to manage requests • Regular reporting to members • Clerk and member training 			

Operational Risk 1 Data loss due to IT failure	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	2	Impact	1	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to comply with statutory requirements • Disruption of council business • Financial systems lost 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council laptop and mobile phone protected by secure pin and password • All data automatically backed up to Microsoft OneDrive • Manual of key systems and procedures developed 							

Operational Risk 2 Damage to/accident Greenside Play Equipment	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	2	Impact	2	Total Score = 4 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury to third party • Loss or damage of equipment • Unplanned expenditure • Loss of valuable play facilities for children in the parish 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly safety inspection of play equipment • Annual safety audit undertaken by independent inspector • Insurance policy maintained • All Parish Council contractors are prohibited from taking road vehicles onto any part of the village green 							

Operational Risk 3 Loss of Grounds Maintenance contractor	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the village green put at risk • Loss of reputation • Budget risk due to increased cost 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust tendering process • Regular liaison with grounds maintenance contractor • Liaison with neighbouring parish councils 							

Operational Risk 4 Loss of council website	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	2	Impact	1	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to comply with statutory requirements • Communication compromised • Loss of ability to publish minutes and agenda • Loss of reputation 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New gov.uk website introduced in 2025 • Service level agreement with Parish Online • Google analytic used to track use of the website • Training in maintenance and use of the website 							

Operational Risk 5 Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer absence	Responsibility	Council	Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Total Score = 6 (medium) ↑
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to comply with statutory requirements • Inability to hold meetings, pay creditors • Inability to undertake day to day functions of the council 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Plan prepared • Membership of the National Association of Parish Councils • Membership of the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association • BHIB insurance policy – Endorsement 3 – Clerk Absence Cover 							

Operational Risk 6 Protection of physical assets/vandalism	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	1	Total Score = 1 (Low) ⇄
	Consequence of Risk						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to services • Damage to third party • Closure of playground • Failure of defibrillator 						
Key Controls in Place							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly visual inspection of outdoor play equipment ▪ Annual in-depth inspection of play equipment by the Play Inspection Company 							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defibrillators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly inspection ▪ Programme of replacement of batteries and pads • Annual review of Asset Register • Clear Affinities Insurance public liability insurance policy
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Document Version Control

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Next review date	May 2026		
<p>No 7 – Risk register updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SR1 – increased risk. - SR2 – reduced risk. - SR3 – increased risk: redrafted to take reflect changing risks arising from the failure of the Borough Council to deliver a revised Local Plan - FR3 – section 106 risk identified and included in the assessment - OR5 – increased: new controls in place. - OR5 – increased risk: new controls in place. 			