

# Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council

## Risk Register

### April 2026

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## Preface

The Risk Register identifies the strategic and operational risks facing the Parish Council and details the measures taken to mitigate their impact.

## Risk Assessment

A risk is an uncertain event or condition that could hinder the delivery of Council objectives. Risk management is the methodical process by which the Council addresses these uncertainties.

By identifying potential issues, the Council implements controls to either minimise the likelihood of an event or reduce its consequences. Each risk is scored from 1 (low) to 9 (high), enabling the Council to prioritise resources effectively.

## Policy Statement

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council is committed to effective risk management. This commitment protects our employees, assets, and community while minimising uncertainty in achieving our vision. While some risks cannot be entirely eliminated, our structured approach ensures they are monitored and managed.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Councillors:** As stewards of the parish, councillors lead the risk management approach. This includes approving the Risk Register and assessing risks associated with major projects.

**Parish Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer:** Responsible for the daily implementation of the Risk Register, the Clerk/RFO provides expert advice on:

- **Compliance:** Ensuring policy and service delivery remain within legal and legislative frameworks.
- **Finance:** Managing insurance, budgetary planning, and financial information systems.
- **Reporting:** Updating the Council on progress and the implications of new policy options.

## Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council Risk Register 2026

Likelihood	Highly likely (3)	Medium (3)	High (6)	High (9)	↓ Better than the last assessment ↑ Worse than the last assessment ⇔ No change
	Possible (2)	Low (2)	Medium (4)	High (6)	
	Unlikely (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)	Medium (3)	
	Impact	Negligible (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe (3)	

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

Strategic Risk 2:	Responsibility	Councillors & clerk	Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Total Score = 6 (High) ⇄
HS2	<p><b>Consequence of Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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"> <li>○ Extensive disruption to village life</li> <li>○ 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</li> <li>○ Risk of environmental disruption due to construction work resulting in noise and dust and the loss of natural habits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The Government announced on 4 October 2023 that HS2 Phase 2a and b had been cancelled. HS2 Ltd was 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><b>Key Controls in Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Stone Railway Campaign Group</li> <li>• Work with neighbouring parish councils</li> <li>• Work with HS2 contractors – to minimise risk to the parish</li> <li>• Work with Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council to eliminate the risk to the parish</li> </ul>						

	Responsibility	Councillors & clerk	Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Total Score = 9 (High) ⇄
	<p><b>Consequence of Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>						

Strategic Risk 3:  Stafford Borough Council Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proliferation in the number of planning applications on sites not previously considered acceptable</li> <li>• Loss of rural nature of the parish</li> <li>• Increase through traffic in Yarnfield and Cold Meece</li> <li>• Extensive disruption to village life</li> <li>• Disruption to services</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key Controls in Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan prioritised</li> <li>• Review and comment on all planning applications</li> <li>• Work with borough councillors and planning officers</li> <li>• Support from Urban Vision Planning Consultants</li> </ul>

Financial Risk 1:  Misappropriation of Council Funds/Financial loss	Responsibility	Parish Clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇔
	<b>Consequence of Risk</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability of council to perform its statutory functions</li> <li>• Reputational risk to the parish council</li> </ul>						
<b>Key Controls in Place</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banking arrangements and changes to banking services approved by the council and recorded in the minutes</li> <li>• Payment of invoices by BACS require 2 signature on the NatWest Bankline system</li> <li>• Monthly bank reconciliation – reported to the council</li> <li>• Accounts to be signed by the Chairperson at each meeting</li> <li>• Quarterly bank reconciliation signed by the lead councillor for finance</li> <li>• Annual scrutiny of all financial records by an internal auditor.</li> </ul>							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual auditors (internal and external) reports to council</li> </ul>
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Financial Risk 3:	Responsibility	Councillors	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇔
Lack of Funds	<b>Consequence of Risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to meet financial demands arising from unplanned activity</li> <li>Loss of reputation</li> <li>Inability to respond quickly to demands or emergency repairs</li> </ul>						
	<b>Key Controls in Place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual transfer of funds to reserve account to increase level of parish council reserves</li> <li>Monthly finance report</li> <li>Commitment accounting system in place to monitor financial expenditure against committed expenditure.</li> <li>Half yearly review of budget</li> <li>Annual budget set by council based on key priorities</li> <li>Working with officers and councillors from Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council to secure potential additional funding.</li> </ul>						

Financial Risk 4:	Responsibility	Parish Clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (low) ⇔
Inadequate Insurance Cover	<b>Consequence of Risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate cover</li> <li>Council incurs liability not covered by insurance</li> <li>Loss of reputation</li> <li>Financial risk to the council</li> </ul>						

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

Governance 2:	Responsibility	Council	Likelihood	1	Impact	2	Total Score = 2 (Low) ⇄
Failure to comply with GDPR/Freedom of Information	<b>Consequence of Risk</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputational risk to the parish council</li> <li>• Lack of transparency</li> <li>• Legal Action</li> </ul>						
	<b>Key Controls in Place</b>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response systems in place to manage requests</li> <li>• GDPR data audit updates, at least annually</li> <li>• Regular reporting to members</li> <li>• Clerk and member training</li> </ul>						

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

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

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

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

Operational:5: Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer absence	Responsibility	Council	Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Total Score = 6 (medium) ↑
	<b>Consequence of Risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to comply with statutory requirements</li> <li>• Inability to hold meetings, pay creditors</li> <li>• Inability to undertake day to day functions of the council</li> </ul>						
	<b>Key Controls in Place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership of the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association</li> <li>• Membership of the National Association of Parish Councils</li> <li>• Multiple bank signatories</li> <li>• Business Continuity Plan being prepares</li> <li>• Clear Affinities Insurance policy – Clerk absence cover</li> </ul>						

Operational: 6	Responsibility	Parish clerk	Likelihood	1	Impact	1	Total Score = 1 (Low) ⇄
Protection of physical assets/vandalism	<b>Consequence of Risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption to services</li> <li>• Damage to third party</li> <li>• Closure of playground</li> <li>• Failure of defibrillator</li> </ul>						
	<b>Key Controls in Place</b> <p>Playground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly visual inspection of outdoor play equipment</li> <li>▪ Annual in-depth inspection of play equipment by the Play Inspection Company</li> </ul> <p>Defibrillators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly inspection</li> <li>▪ Programme of replacement of batteries and pads</li> </ul> <p>Annual review of Asset Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear Affinities Insurance public liability insurance policy</li> </ul>						