ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL RISK REGISTER 2025/2026

Definition of Risk Management
Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisations ability to achieve its objectives and successfully execute its strategies. Risk Management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements. This document has been produced to enable the 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.

- Identify the areas to be reviewed
- Identify what the risks maybe
- Evaluate the management and control of risk and record findings
- Review, assess and revise as necessary

Key: H = High Risk, M = Medium Risk, L = Low Risk, N = Negligible Risk.

Note: all councillors are reminded that they are only covered under the council's insurance if a risk assessment on volunteer activity is undertaken and that it is their responsibility to arrange this with the clerk.

Subject	Risk	Responsibility	Management and Controls	Risk level	Review and action required
FINANCIAL					
Precept	Annual precept is inadequate/excessive. Deadline not met.	Councillors Clerk	Full council meeting to set the precept. Budget information received.	L	Record in minutes.
Budget	Inadequate funding allocations due to unforeseen circumstances. Failure to monitor.	Councillors Clerk	A councillor to inspect & sign bank statements, invoices quarterly re: Financial Regulations Bank balances and breakdown of receipts and payments approved at full council meetings.	L	Record in minutes.
Insurance	Inadequacy of insurance Failure to renew insurance No all risks insurance for street furniture, including war memorials, Nenthead fountain, bus shelters, footway lights & noticeboard. Damage to third party property or individuals	Councillors Clerk	Agenda item to confirm approval of assets insured or otherwise. Insurance taken out for 2 years from June 2025 to reduce costs. Public liability, Fidelity insurance and personal accident to officers/councillors. Requirement for risk assessment for new/voluntary activities Up to date risk assessment.	L	Obtain quotes for insurance at end of 2-year agreement. Annual check on insurance cover. Report to full council and record decision in minutes. Remind councillors of need for risk assessments for some voluntary activities. Reconsider whether some or all assets should be insured for all risks.
Banking arrangements	Fraud. Incorrect payments & bank errors. Banking scams. Loss of bank signatories due to councillors leaving.	Councillors Clerk	Two signatures required on cheque payments. Financial regulations set out the requirements for banking, cheques & reconciliation of accounts.	L	Record payments in minutes.

	FSCS covers up to £85k. Council funds may go over this amount.		Banking scams are getting harder to detect, cautious approach to an unexpected request. Delegated powers to clerk to make online payments when appropriate. 2 Cllrs to authorise electronic payments. Second account set up with Unity Trust bank. Authorisation by 2 cllrs for transactions.		
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty.	Clerk	No petty cash or float. Cash banked regularly at Post Office.	N	Encourage direct debit payments by debtors. Finance inspection to monitor invoicing.
VAT	Failure to submit vat return. Income from town lights may require the council to register for VAT	Clerk	VAT claims submitted.	N	VAT receipts recorded in monthly financial statements.
Internal audit	Loss of personnel. Failure to find suitably qualified auditor. Inappropriate detail in internal audit report	Councillors	Seek new internal auditor with appropriate qualifications if required. Internal audit report submitted bi-annually.	L	Record internal audit report in minutes and action as required. Post report to website to comply with voluntary Transparency code.
Annual return	Inaccurate or incomplete. Failure to submit on time.	Clerk Councillors	Councillors to complete and approve annual return requirements before deadline.	L	To action and minute. Post notice and report to website.
Best value Accountability	Contracts awarded incorrectly. Overspend on services. Difficulty in obtaining 3 quotes. Emergency work may require urgent action.	Councillors	Financial regulations set out the requirements for contracts. Project budgets monitored. Council to justify if accepting a higher quote or if unable to find 3 quotes.	L	Review financial regulations annually.
COUNCIL MANAGEMENT					
Business continuity	Damage to office/building. Viral pandemic closes building. Difficulties due to clerk having to work from home	Clerk Other staff	Files and records are kept in the Town Hall office. Caretaker has duplicate office key. Locks changed and completed. Safe for valuable records. Home working when appropriate.	N	Council business not impacted when clerk works from home.
Meeting location	Venues become unavailable or unsuitable for disabled users. Health and Safety risk. Government failure to allow on-line or hybrid meetings for decision making meetings.	Councillors Clerk Public	Meetings held in Alston Town Hall, and public halls on Alston Moor	L	Housekeeping statement before meetings. Monitor situation re: on-line and hybrid meetings.

Council work	Council decisions not implemented.	Clerk Councillors	Review minutes for confirmation of action. Reports to full council.	L	Ensure actions are within council powers. Note actions implemented in minutes.
Public participation	Lack of participation from the public.	Clerk Councillors	Ensure meetings are publicised. Communicate verbally with residents. Ensure seating is available.	L	Post meeting minutes and agendas on website.
Clerk	Absence due to unavoidable commitments or illness. Failure to update contract. Risk due to lone working. Salaries and expenses paid incorrectly. Adequate time to complete work within working hours. Annual appraisal not completed.	Clerk Councillors	Contingency funding for sick pay, and training. Clerk should be provided with appropriate training reference books and access to legal advice. Clerk's contract updated. Professional accountant appointed to manage payroll. Draft appraisal policy prepared. Expenses following NALC guidelines if required claimed on a regular basis with receipts to council.	L	Adequate funds kept in reserve in the event of long-term sickness. Agree appraisal policy and timing of appraisal. DGP working group to meet regularly.
Contractors	Failure to provide correct specifications for task. Failure to carry out work. Failure to provide copy of insurance or professional qualifications. Difficulty in obtaining 3 quotes.	Contractor Councillors Clerk	Council to agree specifications and appoint councillor/s to oversee work. Contracts signed and necessary documents provided before work begins.	L	2 named councillors appointed to oversee each contract.
Volunteers	Risk of injury Failure to carry out risk assessment for activity so volunteer will be uninsured.	Councillors Public	Councillors to contact clerk to work jointly on a risk assessment for task. Volunteer policy adopted.	L	Review volunteer policy as required. Council volunteers to report activity to clerk to enable production of risk assessment for task. Follow & update lone worker policy. On-line ladder training for anyone wanting to work at a height.
RECORD KEEPING					
Minutes	Failure to keep proper records. Chair fails to sign minutes.	Clerk	Minutes properly recorded and numbered. Posted on website.	N	Minutes sent out and signed by chair at council meetings.
Assets register	Failure to update. Failure to post to website.	Clerk	Updated annually & posted on website. Recorded on AGAR	N	Checked during internal audit.
Financial regulations	Failure to review	Councillors	Review by DGP Committee and submitted to full council for approval.	L	Annual review to be approved by full council.
Standing Orders	Model standing orders not adapted to suit AMPC.	Councillors	Standing orders adopted by council.	L	Annual review to be approved by full council.

	Failure of chair to enforce.				
Freedom of Information	Cost of researching information. Legitimacy of request Not following protocols or processes for request. Risk of non compliance with GDPR.	Clerk	The council has a model publication scheme in place. Where research for the information requires 15 hours work or more a fee may be charged. The need to follow proper procedures. Accurate documentation & record keeping.	N	As required.
Additional policies	Failure to review.	Councillors Clerk	Polices written as required and submitted to full council for approval.	N	Review as required by DGP working group. Approve additional policies at full council.
Computer records Paper records	Loss through damage, fire or corruption. Lack of time to implement document retention policy. Theft of passwords. Risk of non compliance with GDPR	Clerk	Records are stored on a computer that was purchased for the clerk. Back-up system in office. Paper records are stored in a filing cabinet and small safe. Passwords in sealed envelope in safe. Chair to report if opened.	L	Laptop stored away from office. Document retention policy implemented as time permits. Training for staff on computer security.
Website/social media	Risk of inappropriate content on website. Facebook – inappropriate comments from public, staff and members. Inappropriate use of e-mail. Loss of website data. Difficulty in meeting accessibility legislation. Risk of non compliance with GDPR. Risk of reputational damage from negative media or misinformation, inaccurate or misleading information affecting public trust. Cybersecurity vulnerabilities leading data breaches.	Public Councillors Clerk	Social media policy for council members. Monitor website and Facebook. Consider training if required.	L	Training and mentoring if required. Risk management strategies. Content oversight.
Data Protection	Risk of non-compliance with GDPR requirements.	Councillors Clerk	Training courses made available to clerk and other staff as required. On-line training undertaken by clerk and other staff.	L	No action unless further training courses deemed useful.
COUNCILLORS					
Code of conduct	Non compliance Reported to Monitoring Officer	Councillors	Requirement to comply with Code of Conduct Attendance at training sessions.	L	Information on training to be made available to councillors. Members encouraged to take up training opportunities.

Register of interests	Non compliance WFC fail to post and update members ROI. Broken links to WFC website.	Councillors	Register of member's interests to be maintained and reviewed regularly by Councillors.	N	Councillors to keep own copy of their register of interests. Link to WAFC website from parish council website.
Register of gifts/hospitality	Lack of awareness of requirements.	Councillors	Has not been needed to date, but gifts of £25 and over should be recorded.	N	Update register if needed.
Declarations of interest	Failure to declare. Failure to minute declarations.	Councillors Clerk	Minuted. Book available for members to enter interests during meeting.	N	Minutes approved and corrected. Interests book to bring to meetings.
Attendance at meetings	Failure to attend council meetings.	Councillors	Attend all meetings. Attendance record kept.	L	Councillors should explain absences but will be formally asked to provide a reason if 3 consecutive meetings are missed.
Powers	Illegal activity or payments. Number of elected members fall below requirements for GPC. New clerk may not have qualifications for GPC.	Councillors	All activities and payments within the powers of the council to be resolved and minuted at full council meetings.	L	New clerk to be offered training to achieve GPC.
Recruitment and retention of councillors	Inability to fill vacancies Cllrs not completing full term of office. Risk of not being quorate.	Councillors clerk	Raise profile of Parish Council. Application form and guidelines for co – opted councillors. Liaise with Alston Newsletter over reports.	L	Support for new councillors if required. Promote council vacancies. Press releases as required.

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