

# BARTHOMLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Risk Assessment May 2024

### 1. The Council's Areas of Risk

The Council's potential risks can be divided under three main headings:

- *Physical Risk* - the danger of land, property or structures owned or controlled by the Parish Council leading to physical harm to residents, members or other third parties. Where the Council has responsibility in such areas it is important that it acts to minimise any risk, and protects itself as a corporate body, and its members/staff individually, against any consequences of its actions or inactions.
- *Financial Risk* - the Council handles public money. It is important that this money is handled securely, that expenditure is incurred appropriately, and that there is an audit trail to clearly show that the Council accounts for its money in a proper way. Again, the Council should protect itself against consequences of any failures which may occur.
- *Policy Risk* - the Council is required to make corporate decisions which may have consequences. It is important that the Council is conscious of the possible implications of policy decisions, particularly as these may lead to financial, legal or other issues.

### 2. The Council's Response to Risk

The Council can deal with risk in two ways:

- By seeking to eliminate the risk (or at least to minimise the dangers) by way of implementing 'counter measures'; or
- Where possible and appropriate, by taking out insurance cover against the risk (although the Council would still need to be seen to be acting in an appropriate and responsible manner).

Barthomley Parish Council seeks to deal risk in both these ways.

### 3. The Council's exposure and response to risk

#### *Physical Risk*

The Council has owns and is responsible for the following land, property or structures:

- One **noticeboard** located at the foot of Church Bank;
- One **bench** located within the Churchyard;
- One **flagpole** located within the Churchyard.
- One **defibrillator** located outside the Village Hall
- One **litter bin** located at end of Church Bank on Barthomley Road

The Council addresses risk at these locations by requiring the Clerk to inspect each item on a bi-monthly basis when posting notices of meetings. Should any issue be identified this would be drawn to the attention of members.

In the event urgent works are necessary this would be commissioned by the Clerk in consultation with the Council's Chair/Vice-Chair where practicable. The Council also has third party liability insurance to a figure of £6 million.

#### *Financial Risk*

The Council received total income in 2023-24 of £5,769.08 and approved expenditure of £3,279.59. The budget for 2024-25 has been set at £4,678.82.

To reflect the financial position of the Parish Council in terms of any risk of expenditure outstripping income, the Parish Council took a decision in January 2024 to increase the annual precept for 2024-25 to £4,000 in order to continue to balance income against expenditure. At 31 March 2024, the Council's financial resources totalled £7,315.09 – this reflects an increase of £2,489.49.

The Council employs robust measures to ensure financial probity via the following actions: -

- All expenditure is supported by invoice or by a Council resolution to expend the sum involved;
- All cheques are normally signed by two members (on rare occasions the Clerk acts as the second signatory, but not on any payment in which he has a personal interest) at a meeting of the Council;
- The cheque stubs are signed/ initialled by the signatories.
- A financial summary is presented to each (bi-monthly) meeting by the Clerk.
- Although these measures are considered adequate to protect the Council's interests, insurance cover is also held with Fidelity Cover to £25,000: a figure which the Parish Council deems to be appropriate.

#### *Policy Risk*

The Council is very aware of the potential dangers which can follow on from policy decisions. Members are also very conscious that in making policy decisions they need to ensure that the potential consequences of such a decision have been considered. This is best ensured by a diligent approach coupled with the conscientiousness of both members and the Clerk.

The Council feels that its record in recent years shows that it is aware of this issue, and has acted responsibly. Major policy decisions are subject to detailed discussion and careful decision making.

At each meeting members are encouraged to declare any interests as a fixed agenda item, or otherwise as necessary or appropriate.

#### **4. Summary**

The Council is aware of its responsibility to assess potential risks, and to take appropriate actions. Through a combination of sound practice (through its financial and audit arrangements, inspection and maintenance of assets, measured policy making and probity of members and staff) and adequate insurance cover it believes that it has adequate measures in place to assess and manage risk.

**The above document was considered by the Council at its meeting of 14th May 2024 and adopted at that meeting.**