

PUDDLETOWN AREA PARISH COUNCIL

Risk Register

Date of Assessment: 27th October 2025

Assessed by: Michelle Harrington – Proper Officer

Next Review Date: 27th October 2026

Presented To: Full Council (November 2025)

1. Purpose

This assessment identifies and evaluates hazards associated with all operational, administrative, and financial activities undertaken by Puddletown Area Parish Council. The objective is to protect councillors, staff, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public from harm while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, and best practice. It provides an overview of the controls in place and identifies additional actions required to reduce residual risks to an acceptable level.

2. Description of Activity.

This risk register covers all council operations, including but not limited to: financial management, staff employment, contractor management, IT systems, communication platforms (website, Facebook), and governance activities (meetings, public engagement, data protection).

3. Risk Rating System

Likelihood	Description	Severity	Description	Risk Rating
1	Rare	1	Insignificant (no impact)	1–4 = Low
2	Unlikely	2	Minor impact	5–9 = Med
3	Possible	3	Moderate impact	10–16 = High
4	Likely	4	Major impact	17–25 = Critical
5	Almost Certain	5	Failure to operate	

Risk Score = Likelihood × Severity

4. Risk Assessment Table

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Initial Risk	Management/ Control of Risk	Further Action / Controls Required	Residual Risk
Assets	Loss, damage etc	4x3=12 High	Annual inspection, update insurance and asset registers, Individual risk assessments carried out annually.		3x3=9 Med
	Poor maintenance of assets leading to loss of value, damage or injury.	3x3=9 Med	Independent annual inspection of playground equipment. Regular maintenance of equipment carried out by Caretaker or specialised contractor.		2x3=6 Med

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Assets Continued	Risk or damage to third party property or individuals	3x4=12 High	Review adequacy of Public Liability Insurance annually, regular maintenance checks, reporting of hazards. Risk Assessments for events carried out and kept.		3x2=6 Med
Computer	Injury or harm from misuse, prolonged use	3x3=9 Med	The Clerk is aware of best practice whilst using computer; posture, taking regular breaks, position of screen.		2x3=6 Med
Council records	Electronic records, loss and security	3x4=12 High	Back-ups taken on monthly basis and copy held off site by Chairman. Originals stored on Clerk's computer which is password protected and covered by internet security software. List of passwords kept in safe.		3x2=6 Med
	Security of hard copies	3x4=12 High	Documents stored in Clerk's home office, which is secured against theft. Files are stored in a non-conspicuous place. Smoke detectors fitted in Clerks home. Old Minutes archived and stored at County Hall. All hard copies of document are destroyed when no longer required.		2x3=6 Med
Data leakage, cyber-attack, ransomware	Cyber-attack, ransomware, Loss of data, confidential data and information,	3x4=12 High	The Clerk is aware of best practice with data management, cyber risk and data loss, minimal confidential data is held. Stored sensitive information is password protected.		2x3=6 Med
Data Protection	Breeches of data protection	3x4=12 High	The Councils has passwords to protect files containing personal information. Hardcopies are destroyed when no longer required. Any breach is reported to the Dorset Council Monitoring Officer.		2x3=6 Med
	Non compliance with GDPR regulations	3x4=12 High	The Council registers annually with ICO; Website regularly reviewed to comply with GDPR, ensure all members are aware of their obligations with respect to GDPR. The Clerk to ensure compliance with regard to the keeping of records. Regular update training recommended for all councillors and staff		2x3=6 Med

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Defibrillators	Misuse of defibrillators, units not serviced correctly.	3x4=12 High	Fully trained volunteer guardians regularly check units to ensure they are functioning correctly and serviced. Actual misuse is practically impossible due to the design of the units.	Local volunteer required for Puddletown Library Defib checks on monthly basis.	1x2=2 Low
Election Costs	Increased costs not met by reserves.	3x3=9 Med	Reserve funds earmarked and considered annually.		2x2=4 Low
Employing Contractors	Not seeking best value for money	3x3=9 Med	The Councils Financial Regulations advise on protocol for seeking quotes and tenders to obtain best value for money. Any decisions must be voted for by whole Council.		2x3=6 Med
Equipment	Malfunctioning and causing harm	3x4=12 High	To check equipment regularly for defects and to ensure it is used in accordance with guidance.	Council to have equipment PAT Tested two years due 2025.	2x2=4 Low
Expenditure	Goods not supplied to Parish Council	3x3=9 Med	Process to track delivery / services ordered.		3x3=9 Med
	Invoice incorrectly calculated or recorded	3x3=9 Med	RFO checks arithmetic on invoice, before processing.		1x3=3 Low
	Payable is excessive or to wrong party	3x4=12 High	Two signatories sign cheques or approve payments online against finance records present to council for approval.		1x4=4 Low
	Payments paid by RFO without consent of Council	3x4=12 High	All payments are listed and authorised each month and accompanying invoices/notes are available for scrutiny should Councillors / public wish.		1x4=4 Low
External Audit	Annual Return - Inaccuracies occur.	3x3=9 Med	RFO balances accounts with bank statements each month. Internal Auditor and full Council review before submitting the Annual return.		2x2=4 Low
	Late submission incurring fees, incorrect submission incurs fees	3x3=9 Med	The Clerk diarises submission of audit.		2x2=4 Low
Face to Face Meetings after a pandemic	Legally compliant & observe safety guide-lines issued by the Government	3x3=9 Med	Safety precautions put in place when face-to-face meetings after resume after a pandemic following Government guidelines in force at the time of meetings.		2x2=4 Low

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Financial Records	Inaccurate or inadequate financial records	3x2=6 Med	Parish Council subscribe to Scribe Accounting Software. RFO keeps full records in accordance with retentions of records advice, Financial Regs, and other regulations.		2x2=4 Low
	Loss of records	3x4=12 High	Back-ups taken on monthly basis and copy given to Chairman for safe off-site storage.		3x2=6 Med
	Sufficient information for confidence decisions to be made.	3x3=9 Med	Monthly reports provided to council for approval. Including bank reconciliation, payments made, and actual income.		2x3=6 Med
Fire	Risk of harm from Fire	3x4=12 High	Smoke detectors installed in Clerks home. Paper is stored away from electrical appliances. Legal records stored in fireproof box. Electronic backup of laptop carried out Monthly.		2x2=4 Low
Freedom of Information	Neglecting legislation, not recording or retaining information correctly.	3x4=12 High	The Councils has a publication scheme and keeps records in accordance with data retention guidelines.		2x3=6 Med
Grants & donations from Parish Council.	No power to pay or no evidence of agreement.	3x2=6 Med	Grant application approved by Council and minuted with the power used to authorise payment if General Power of Competence not held.		1x2=2 Low
Grants to Parish Council.	Grant awarded not paid.	3x4=12 High	Terms and conditions of any grant received to be met as necessary and paperwork completed to meet deadlines.		1x4=4 Low
Health and Safety	Health and Safety Policy inadequate, Council negligent in the event of an accident	3x4=12 High	The Council annual ratify the Health and Safety Policy. The Clerk carries out a detailed risk assessment annually where necessary. The Council does hold Public Liability Insurance should an accident occur.		3x2=6 Med
Insurance	Inadequate cover for assets and general activities. No public liability and fidelity Insurance.	3x3=9 Med	Public Liability Insurance (PLI) policy in place for general activities and assets and reviewed by Clerk annually. Fidelity Insurance (FI) included within general insurance policy. The Clerk is aware of new assets to add to PLI. Policy wording is checked each year to ensure that proposed cover is adequate.		1x3=3 Low

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Internal Audit	Unqualified auditor.	3x3=9 Med	Aim to return to a qualified auditor completing interim audits up to three times a year before final audit in April.	Due to ill health the internal auditor stepped down for 2025-26. After intensive search the Clerk has contacted a Dorset Clerk who is a trained Internal Auditor who has agreed to audit the 2025-26 accounts.	2x2=4 Low
Internet Banking	Account open in Prish Council name	3x4=12 High	Any application to open an internet banking account in the name of the Council MUST be approved by resolution and the application form signed by at least two existing cheque signatories.		1x4=4 Low
	Overdraft facilities	3x4=12 High	The bank must be instructed that overdraft facilities are not authorised.		1x4=4 Low
	Signatories	3x4=12 High	Accounts in the Parish Council name must have two signatories and one administrator. Two signatures are required on a cheque as is counter signing on cheque stubs. Cheques are numbered on Cash Book and all spoilt cheques accounted for. One administrator plus two authorisers are required for BACS.		1x4=4 Low
	Virus – Hack of account	3x4=12 High	No internet banking is undertaken on a computer to which the public have access.		1x4=4 Low
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payment	3x4=12 High	Educate Councillors as to their legal powers through training and review of policies and standing orders. Clerk to check legislation/advisory bodies, where necessary		1x2=2 Low
Meeting location	Adequacy / Health and Safety / Accessibility	3x3=9 Med	Parish Council meetings are held in either the Puddletown or Tolpuddle Village Hall. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for those attending the meeting in terms of accessibility, H&S, social distancing where necessary and comfort aspects Risk Assessments carried out.	The council should consider hearing loop/microphone for hard of hearing.	2x2=4 Low
Members' interests	Conflict of interest	3x3=9 Med	Interests to be declared at the beginning of meetings and minuted and any conflict addressed as appropriate. Councillors to update their register as and when required.		2x2=4 Low
	Failure to complete a declaration	3x4=12 High	New Councillors receive a link initiated by the Clerk then complete electronically a Register of Interest direct to Dorset Council.		2x3=6 Med

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Minutes / Agenda's	Accurate and legal	3x2=6 Med	Review and check legislation if necessary. Agendas are sent to Councillors where possible via email. Draft minutes are circulated in advance of a meeting, agreed by Councillors during the next meeting, then signed. The signed copy is retained in the minute's book. Minutes are published online for transparency.		2x2=4 Low
Notice Boards	Doors / hinges broken and injure someone. Smashed glass causing injury.	3x2=6 Med	Noticeboards are regularly inspected by the Clerk. Councillors / Caretaker would alert Clerk if they spotted any damage to a notice board.		2x2=4 Low
Other Income	Cash / Cheque Handling	3x2=6 Med	Cheques received are banked as soon as possible. There is no petty cash or float		1x1=1 Low
Password Management	Loss of password, unauthorised access by others	3x3=9 Med	The Clerk is aware of best practice. A handwritten list of passwords is stored in the locked fireproof lock box within the Clerks home. The Chairman or Vice Chairman are to ensure with any staff changes; all passwords are changed.		2x3=6 Med
	Not paid to Parish Council	2x3=6 Med	RFO to confirm receipt in April & September and follow up if necessary.		1x2=2 Low
	Not submitted or submitted late.	3x3=9 Med	Clerk to ensure item on agenda in time to amendment and approve before submission date. Once submitted RFO to ensure confirmation email received from Dorset Council (DC)		1x3=3 Low
Reputation / Forward Planning	Loss of reputation leading to negative feedback from the public	3x3=9 Med	Good communication – articles in local publications, such as the Parish Magazine. Responsible use of social media, consultation with the public, use of the website. Financial records on website and transparent		2x2=4 Low
	Med to long term plans not in place, resulting in lack of vision and planning effectively for the future	3x3=9 Med		Council should consider creating a Parish Action Plan published, on website and updated regularly with council approved future projects.	2x2=4 Low
Reserves – Earmarked	Adequate to supply specific project	3x3=9 Med	Reserves statement prepared by RFO for consideration and agreement by Council. Monitored monthly by RFO.		1x3=3 Low

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Reserves – General	Adequate to function	3x3=9 Med	General reserves level agreed/ratified annually. Monitored monthly by RFO.		1x3=3 Low
Salaries	PAYE administered incorrectly	3x3=9 Med	PAYE administered internally through HMRC Basic Tools. Details presented monthly to councillors for approval.		1x3=3 Low
	Pension administered incorrectly	3x3=9 Med	Pension administered internally through NEST website. Details presented monthly to councillors for approval.		1x3=3 Low
	Wrong salary / hours / rate paid	3x4=12 High	Check salary, hours and rate to contract. Council to verify salary scale and agreed pay rate. Salaries and method of payment to be agreed in advance.		1x4=4 Low
Social Media Pages / Posts	Incorrect information published on Facebook pages, data breach	3x3=9 Med	The Clerk is trained on what information should be present on a website; what is requisite and what shows 'quality status' and is aware as to what is sensitive or confidential information. The Clerk can update the Social Media pages. The log in process is password protected.		2x2=4 Low
Speed Indicator Device	Risk of damage, injury, from / to speed sign, when in position or moving	3x4=12 High	Fully trained volunteer regularly checks units to ensure they are functioning correctly and serviced. Fully trained volunteer helps move the speed sign when required		2x4=8 Med
Staff	Fraud by staff	3x4=12 High	Fidelity insurance should be considered. Reports produced monthly for Council approval. Budget scrutinised by full council over several months before final approval.		1x2=2
	Loss of key personnel (Clerk)	3x4=12 High	Hours, health, stress, training, long term sick, early departure – risk monitored and managed as appropriate. Chairman / Vice Chairman conduct an annual performance review in line with current contract.		2x4=8 Med
Trip Hazards	Risk of tripping	3x4=12 High	To ensure Parish Council working environments have clear access and is clutter free. Around the Parish individual area risk assessment cover trip hazards.		2x2=4 Low

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VAT	Late submission incurring fees, incorrect submission incurs fees	3x3=9 Med	Form 126 submitted quarterly, if over HMRC threshold. Dates noted on Clerks calendar for submission. Scribe Accounts linked to HMRC account. Scribe report downloaded directly listing all VAT income and expenditure.		1x3=3 Low
Website	Incorrect info published on website & Non-compliance with required information	3x3=9 Med	The Clerk is trained on what information should be present on a website; what is requisite and what shows 'quality status' and is aware as to what is sensitive or confidential information. The Clerk can update the website. The log in process is password protected, with an addition layer of authentication via an App		2x3=6 Med

5. Emergency Procedures

- In case of data breach or IT system failure, notify the Proper Officer immediately and follow GDPR and ICO reporting requirements.
- For suspected fraud or financial irregularity, report to the Chairperson of the finance working group and external auditors; suspend related transactions.
- For health or wellbeing incidents involving staff or councillors, report to the Chairman for support and recording.
- Maintain confidentiality and record incidents in the Council's log for monitoring and review.

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Safety

Task	Control Measures / PPE Required
Computer / desk-based work	Ensure good posture, appropriate chair height, and take regular screen breaks.
Lone working	Inform a colleague or councillor when working alone; ensure phone access is available.
Handling paper records	Use safe lifting techniques for files; maintain tidy workspaces.
	No additional PPE required for standard office-based activities

7. Review & Monitoring

- Review this Risk Assessment annually or sooner if significant operational or legislative changes occur.
- The Proper Officer will monitor risk controls and report findings to Full Council.
- Council will ensure staff and members remain aware of their roles in risk management

Overall Residual Risk: Low (with all controls in place)