Over Kellet Parish Council

Meeting Date: 27th May 2025

Agenda Item: 6

Report of: The Parish Clerk

Review of the Risk Register

1. Introduction

Smaller local councils are statutorily required to complete an annual review of their risk management arrangements, normally at the annual meeting. The current register was approved by Council on 10th May 2023.

2. Detail

A review has been completed of the Risk Register, with the proposed update attached, showing substantive changes and key issues highlighted in yellow. Existing risks have been updated with any additional mitigations adopted since the last review. No new risks have been added.

The main changes are summarised as:

Risk R16	**The Council's performance may be affected by the existence of Member vacancies .** The Council currently has one Casual Vacancy following the resignation of Councillor William Candlin. The risk level has been raised from 'Low' to 'Medium'. The process to fill the casual vacancy has been commenced.
Risk R18:	**Loss of employee support (Clerk) through illness / early resignation etc.** The Clerk has indicated an intention to retire during the current year, 2025. The risk level has been raised from 'Low' to 'Medium'. The Parish Council will need to make arrangements to replace the Clerk and achieve and effective 'hand-over'.
Risk R21:	**Compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).** With effect from the 2025/26 financial year, the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) 2025 Practitioners Guide requires local councils to have adopted an IT Policy. The risk level has not been changed from its previous level of 'Low'.

In other areas, risk levels have generally remained static and no other clearly emerging or escalating risks have been identified.

Councillors are asked to consider the draft Risk Register and make suggestions for amendments or the inclusion of any additional risks.

3. Recommendations

(1) That, subject to any further agreed changes or additions, the draft Risk Register for 2025/26 is approved and adopted.

Over Kellet Parish Council

Risk Assessment and Log   Review Draft: 27th May 2025

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
Strategic and Operational					
R1.	Failure to represent community interest effectively in relation to matters likely to impact the parish	A five-year Parish Plan was adopted in January 2019. Arrangements for consulting parishioners established via the parish magazine OK View and the Parish Council website. Parish Council is consulted by principal authorities and agencies. Membership of NALC / LALC provides a source of advice.	Medium	Consider whether/how the Council wishes to continue with the current format of the Parish Plan. See also Risk R13	Council / Clerk
R2.	Personal injury / damage to members of the public or their property arising from defects on the council's property	Property comprises fixed installations (i.e. seats and benches; bus shelter etc). Undertake regular maintenance and prompt repair to any damage by the Lengthsman. Lengthsman maintains equipment / assets owned / provided by the council. Insurance includes employee liability cover for Lengthsman.	Low	Lengthsman will maintain equipment / assets owned / provided by the council. Insurance includes employee liability cover for Lengthsman. Periodically review insurance cover and timely renewal to avoid compensation claims	Council / Clerk / Lengthsman

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R3.	Minutes are inaccurate and/or decisions may be illegal or ultra-vires.	Meetings are conducted in accordance with standing operational procedures and Financial Regulations. Minutes are approved by the parish council at every meeting.	Low		
R4.	Compensation claim resulting from (alleged) negligent act or accidental error or omission by the council or its employee(s)	Low risk given current limited activities of parish council. Ensure parish council decisions are based on full information including professional advice where necessary Appropriate Insurance cover is in place	Low	Monitor position as parish council develops and implements plans for the parish.	Council / Clerk
R5.	Action against the council for libel or slander	Meetings are conducted in accordance with standing operational procedures, Financial Regulations and Members' Code of Conduct. Appropriate insurance cover is in place	Low		Council / Clerk
Financial					
R6.	The parish council undertakes / makes a payment that is illegal / outside its powers	Formal financial regulations adopted and reviewed annually. Appropriate insurance cover is in place	Low	Ensure councillors are aware and kept up-to-date on the legal powers of parish councils	Council / Clerk

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R7.	Financial records inadequately / incorrectly maintained	Clerk is a qualified accountant/audit professional. All payments are supported by an invoice / receipt or valid claim. Financial accounts are checked annually by internal and external auditors Details of receipts and payments are reported to each meeting of the council.	Low	Establish quarterly financial reports including bank reconciliation to Council meetings in July, October and January each year.	Council / Clerk
R8.	Financial loss due to ineffective procedures or banking error	Bank statements are scrutinised by Clerk upon receipt. Banking arrangements are periodically reviewed and accounts are annually checked by internal and external auditors and at least quarterly by council.	Low	Establish quarterly financial reports including bank reconciliation to Council meetings in July, October and January each year.	Clerk
R9.	Loss of monies due to fraudulent act (internal or external)	All payments are countersigned/approved by two councillors and checked against invoices. All expenditure is approved by the council and accounts subject to scrutiny by council and internal and external auditors and the public (annually) Appropriate insurance cover is in place	Low		Council / Clerk

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R10.	Order for precept not submitted or paid by local authority. Precept is inadequate to meet plans	Precept for the following year is considered in January. Amount of precept required is based on plans for the coming year and the forecasted difference between income and expenditure. A robust budget planning process has been introduced prior to determining the required level of precept for the following year. Submission of precept order and receipt of monies is checked by the Clerk.	Low		Council / Clerk
R11.	VAT incorrect / not reimbursed / not properly accounted for	VAT analysed in accounts maintained by Clerk and scrutinised by council. VAT returns agreed and submitted annually. VAT arrangements are reviewed by internal and external auditors.	Low		
R12.	Income tax / NI not properly accounted for and paid to HMRC	HMRC PAYE account has been established. Payroll arrangements and system has been established and is operating effectively.	Low		

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R13.	Unidentified / inadequate general and/or earmarked reserves	Amount of reserves required for the following year is considered as part of the budget process on the basis of available funds and costed plans for the coming year. Earmarked Reserves are reviewed during the budget process. The level of funds in earmarked reserves has reduced significantly due to a small number of high value applications.	Medium	Consider the introduction of a formal Reserves Policy Review and prioritise actions/funds required to implement the Parish Plan	Council / Clerk
R14.	Risk of a by-election being called for on the occurrence of a 'casual vacancy' on the Council. An estimated cost of £5,700 has been advised by Lancaster City Council.	The target level of General Reserve has been set to take account of the estimated cost of holding an election.	Low	Review the estimated cost of a by-election	Council / Clerk
R15.	Inadequate management of financial and other risks associated with the activities of the parish council	A register of significant risks was produced and approved in 2017/18 and reviewed annually to ensure that risks are identified and mitigated	Low	Review significant risks annually	Council / Clerk
People					
R16.	The Council's performance may be affected by the existence of Member vacancies	The Council currently has one Casual Vacancy.	~~Low~~ Medium	The process to fill the casual vacancy has been commenced.	Council
R17.	Councillor or employee performance may be inefficient or ineffective	Potential development need for the newly elected Parish Councillors	Medium	Council will support the Clerk and Councillors' development through attendance at training where appropriate.	Council / Clerk

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R18.	Loss of employee support (Clerk) through illness / early resignation etc.	The Clerk has indicated an intention to retire during the current year, 2025	~~Low~~ Medium	Agree arrangements to replace the Clerk with effect from October 2025.	Council
Regulatory					
R19.	Failure to comply with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	Requirements of the acts specifically in relation to the annual return and audit arrangements are brought to Members attention when considering the annual return.	Low		Council / Clerk
R20.	Compliance with Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (the Code)	Information is published on the Parish Council's own website Periodic reviews of compliance with the Code and the effectiveness of current publication arrangements.	Low		Council / Clerk

Risk No.	Description of Risk	Controls in Place / Mitigation	Low / Medium / High Risk	Actions Taken / Planned	Responsibility
R21.	Compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	Implications of GDPR brought to Members attention in April 2018. Parish Clerk designated as the Data Protection Officer. Data holdings and processing arrangements have been assessed and controls established to ensure compliance and mitigate the risk of any GDPR breaches. Data Protection Policy established in December 2018 Dedicated email addresses for Councillors introduced in February 2020 The Parish Council is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office.	Low	Monitor compliance and review arrangements on a regular basis. The Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) 2025 Practitioners Guide requires local councils to have adopted an IT Policy.	Council / Clerk
R22.	Compliance with Freedom of Information Act 2000	Requirements and implications of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 brought to Members attention in April 2018. A publication scheme setting out the classes of information that the Parish Council publishes, or intends to publish, including how that information may be obtained and any charges that may be made was established in December 2018.	Low	Monitor compliance and review arrangements on a regular basis.	Council / Clerk

Over Kellet Parish Council

Meeting Date: **27th May 2025**

Agenda Item: **7**

Report of: **The Parish Clerk**

Review of Policies and Procedures

1. Introduction

Recommended practice is that local councils annually review their significant policy documents, normally at the annual meeting. The current policies can be viewed on the Parish Council website at https://overkelletpc.org/policies/

2. Detail

A review has been undertaken of the following key policy documents to ensure they remain accurate, current and fit for purpose. The proposals are follows:

a) **Standing Orders.** No proposed changes

b) **Financial Regulations** No proposed changes

c) **Information Management and Data Protection Policy**
Amendment made to update Information Commissioner's Office contact details (Section 9)

d) **Privacy Notice**
Amendment made to update Information Commissioner's Office contact details.

e) **Publication Scheme**

- Class 6 – List and Registers. Removed a reference to the availability for inspection of the current copy of the Register of Electors;
- Class 7 – The Services we offer. The section will be updated to more accurately reflect the information available through the website.

f) **Complaints Procedure (and Complaints Form)** No proposed changes

Councillors are asked to consider these conclusions and make suggestions for any further amendments necessary.

3. New Developments

With effect from the 2025/26 financial year, the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) 2025 Practitioners Guide requires local councils to have adopted an IT Policy. The Clerk will present a draft policy for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

4. Recommendations

That, subject to the above and any further proposed changes or additions, the following existing policy documents are confirmed, approved and adopted:

a) Standing Orders
b) Financial Regulations
c) Information Management and Data Protection Policy
d) Privacy Notice
e) Publication Scheme
f) Complaints Procedure