
Downton Parish Council

Risk Assessment: Absence of the Clerk/RFO

Briefing Report

TO:	Members of the Parish Council
SUBJECT:	Risk Assessment: Absence of the Clerk
REPORT AUTHOR:	Safia Kauser [Locum Parish Clerk]. Amended by Cllrs Brentor and Mace.

Purpose of Report: To provide members with a briefing report and risk assessment document identifying potential risks that would exist and mitigation actions for the Downton Parish Council in the event of the unavailability of the Clerk.

Definition of Risk

An uncertainty of outcome of actions or events which impacts upon the Council achieving its objectives.

Background to Risk Management

The Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide refers to risk as an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, will have an effect on the achievement of an authority's objectives. Risk management is the process whereby authorities methodically address the risks associated with what they do and the services which they provide. The focus of risk management is to identify what can go wrong and take proportionate steps to avoid this or successfully manage the consequences.

Responsibility for the Management of Risk

The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. In accordance with the Councils Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the Clerk is responsible for preparing, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements should be reviewed by the Council at least annually. When considering any new activity, the Clerk is responsible for preparing a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council. Risk management arrangements should include the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council.

Risk Assessment Document

The attached risk assessment document focuses on all potential risks identified in the event that the Clerk/RFO is absent. The Council should recognise that in order to achieve its objectives it must manage risk within its risk appetite. Where risks lie beyond the risk appetite, the council (members and officers) should take appropriate action to reduce those risks.

Downton Parish Council

Risk Assessment Document: Absence of the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

RISK ASSESSMENT RATING CRITERIA

LIKELIHOOD	Highly probable 76-99%	4				
	Probable 51-75%	3				
	Possible 26-50%	2				
	Unlikely 1-25%	1				
			1	2	3	4
			Minor	Moderate	Serious	Major
			IMPACT			
FINANCIAL IMPACT			Loss of up to £1000	Loss of up to £10,000	Loss of up to £50,000	Loss of over £50,000
and/or REPUTATIONAL IMPACT			Minimal / localised damage to reputation	Damage to reputation within the Parish	Damage to reputation within the region.	National damage to reputation; intervention by Government
and/or HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT			No health and safety impact	Minor injury, possibly requiring treatment by health care professional	Serious injuries	Fatality or life-changing injuries

Risk Appetite And Approaches To Managing Risk

LIKELIHOOD	Highly probable 76-99%	4		TREAT (take action to reduce risk exposure by introducing measures / controls)		TERMINATE (ie stop the activity that generates the risk)
	Probable 51-75%	3				
	Possible 26-50%	2				
	Unlikely 1-25%	1	TOLERATE (an informed view reached that the risk is accepted)			TRANSFER (usually via insurance or other contractual arrangement)
			1	2	3	4
			Minor	Moderate	Serious	Major
			IMPACT			

Risk Rating	Risk Appetite and Action
Green	Risks rated as GREEN are within the risk appetite of the Council. It is unlikely that further additional measures are required to control these risks. These risks may be tolerated by the Council.
Amber	Risks rated as AMBER are within the risk appetite of the Council, however further additional measures may be needed to treat (i.e. control) the risks and so reduce exposure OR to consider risk transfer e.g. via insurance, franchising or other contractual arrangement. The Council must be periodically advised of amber risks and the action planned and/or taken to control them.
Red	Risks rated as RED go beyond the risk appetite of the Council. Immediate action is required to bring the risk within the Council's risk appetite or, if this is not possible or desired, to terminate the activity that creates the risk. The Council must be immediately advised of red risks and regularly updated on the action planned and taken to control them until they are within the risk appetite of the Council. <i>Any action taken must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</i>

Downton Parish Council

**RISK ASSESSMENT: Absence of the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
2021**

Dated: 22 January

Risks Identified	Impact	Likelihood	Risk rating	Controls in place	Additional controls required	Timeframe	Responsible officer/ Committee
<p>1. Sickness, incapacity, early retirement, retirement, resignation, or death</p>	4	2		<p>Sickness absence procedure is in place.</p> <p>CILCA qualified Locum Clerk appointed to provide 10 hours work per week on a rolling basis contract to be reviewed prior to each month end during period of absence. Separate risk assessment carried out for the Locum cover.</p> <p>Administrative officer employed for 10 hours a week to cover urgent tasks in the absence of the Clerk/RFO with delegated powers of Clerk/RFO approved by the council on 25th January 2021. Powers exercised to be recorded in a delegation register. A separate risk assessment has been carried out for the Admin Officer exercising RFO powers on emergency expenditure.</p> <p>Councillor can be appointed to act as a Clerk on an unpaid basis in accordance with the LGA 1972 s.112(5) subject to full council approval.</p> <p>SLCC offer locum staff in response to sudden departure/incapacity of staff members.</p>	<p>Procedure to be developed for dealing with leavers and this ensures that assets are recovered, and knowledge is harnessed.</p> <p>Officer appraisal to take place on regular basis to include setting and monitoring objectives.</p> <p>Exit interview format to be developed.</p> <p>An approach to recruiting a Locum Clerk / RFO needs to be agreed.</p> <p>Extend the temporary powers approved by the Council on 25th January 2021 to cover urgent tasks during any future absence of the Clerk/RFO.</p>	May 2021	St Comm/ Clerk

<p>2. Inadequate capacity to fulfil the Council's objectives due to loss of knowledge</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Knowledge with the Administrative Officer to support business continuity.</p> <p>Current staffing capacity is adequate to deal with workload.</p>	<p>Consider further opportunities for succession planning and business continuity and develop and adopt a formal business continuity plan.</p> <p>Secure additional capacity or release current capacity prior to accepting new work.</p> <p>Implement Staffing Committee Terms of Reference with diarised monthly meeting of Sub Committee or identified representative to 'manage, supervise and appraise the Clerk' to ensure that Council decisions requiring action by the Clerk can be achieved or prioritised whilst ensuring that the Clerk is not 'micro-managed'.</p> <p>Locum Clerk in January 2021 suggested the Clerk identifies monthly or weekly set of objectives and reviews achievements with an identified member of the Staffing Committee to support time management,</p>	<p>May 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p>	<p>St Comm/ Clerk</p> <p>St Comm/ Clerk</p>
<p>3. Inadequate training</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Highly qualified Clerk in post</p>	<p>Administrative Officer to be given training as required by WALC on financial procedures and council</p>		

			<p>CILCA qualified Locum Clerk in post.</p> <p>Administrative Officer has received sufficient professional and on-the-job training to ensure they can fulfil their role. The officer has six years' experience as a Parish Clerk for a previous employer.</p>	<p>business.</p> <p>Administrative Officer to undertake the ILCA 'Introduction to Local Council Administration' if not already held to enable possible progression to the CILCA qualification required for Clerks if considered appropriate for the role.</p> <p>Officer appraisal to take place on regular basis to include identifying development needs (e.g. coping with change).</p>		
4. Incomplete or inaccurate financial records	2	3	<p>Administrative Officer has the experience to fulfil role. Expenditure scrutinised by Full Council.</p> <p>Two signatures required for all cheque payments. Bank access given to authorised signatories only</p>	<p>Rialtas finance system populated, and understanding/training given to Admin. Officer and 'finance manager as identified in the Corporate risk assessment register..</p>	April 2021	Clerk
5. Loss of Data	3	2	<p>All work documents available on shared drive. System backed up daily on a hard drive.</p> <p>Accounts system is backed up and stored securely</p> <p>Council documents in order and secured in office.</p> <p>Password List is compiled of all usernames, password and accounts held on behalf of the council and to be stored in a confidential secure place in case of an emergency.</p>	<p>Passwords to be changed every three months and shared as identified in the column to the left</p> <p>All computer held documentation to be automatically stored on 'One Drive' and accessible by both the Clerk and the Admin Officer through the 'Cloud' (with appropriate safeguards).</p> <p>Council paper documents not in regular use to be stored in secure</p>	May 2021	Clerk

					storage away from Clerk's home base and this to be reviewed yearly with access being available to at the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.		
6. Payroll inaccurate	2	2		The council has carried out a specific risk assessment for the management of payroll. The further actions taken on payroll reduce the risk rating to a tolerable level. Payroll reports are reviewed by Councillors before payment are made to staff via bank transfer.	Payroll information made available to the Admin. Officer and Staffing Committee members	End Feb 2021	Clerk Councillors to commission
7. Loss of Experienced Clerk due to Employment Tribunal claim	4	3		<p>Employment contracts based on SLCC/NALC guidance issued to all officers.</p> <p>Professional HR consultancy service available via South West Councils</p> <p>Legal expenses insurance cover with the council's insurance providers. Cover should include Legal Expenses, Limit of indemnity Employment disputes and compensation awards</p> <p>Training, employee handbook and appropriate management procedures for staff? Code of conduct and training for councillors.</p> <p>Employee procedures including grievance and disciplinary procedures have been reviewed and approved using the South West Councils, NALC or other model templates.</p>	<p>Employment Law contract with South West Councils that includes insurance cover for any tribunal claims, including compensation awards.</p> <p>Check sufficient cover available from council's insurance cover.</p>	March 2021	Clerk/ St Comm