NEWBURGH PARISH COUNCIL: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN.

1. **POLICY**

1.1 The recognition and management of risk is integral to the Council's stewardship of their assets and resources and the effective and efficient discharge of their duties and responsibilities to the community.

1.2 Risk assessment is a continuous process for the Council. Risks may be financial or non-financial.

1.3 The Council are responsible for the management of risk in accordance with this policy and plan.

1.4 The Parish Clerk is responsible for advising the Council on risk assessment and for conducting his/her duties in a manner, which avoids undue risks to the Council

1.5 Key risks are identified in the Risk Management Plan and Register.

1.5 Risk Management is an aspect of the internal controls operated by the council through their approved Financial Regulations. Internal Control are subject to scrutiny by the internal auditor.

2. **RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

2.1 This plan defines how the Council will manage identified risks.

2.2 Risks can be defined as any threat or possibility that an action or event will adversely (or beneficially) affect the interests of the Council.

2.3 Risk management is not a process of avoiding risk altogether but seeks to identify risk and assess its implications in order to inform decisions.

2.4 The level of risk can be judged by the likelihood of it occurring and the effect on the Council should it do so.

- Significant Impact and High likelihood = High Level Risk
- Minimal Impact and Low Likelihood = Low Level Risk

2.5 Judgement of the level of risk may rely on past experience or a specific assessment of a particular instance, or both. The Council will determine whether a risk is acceptable in all the circumstances.

2.6 Generally much of the identified risk, which can be quantified, is covered by insurances carried by the Council, i.e.:

- Public liability
- Employer liability
- Money
- Fidelity guarantee
- Officials indemnity
- Equipment

2.7 The appended Risks Register forms part of this Plan.
2.8 The Council will review the Plan as part of their annual budgetary procedure.
2.9 The Plan should read in conjunction with the Council’s Financial Regulations.

NEWBURGH PARISH COUNCIL RISK REGISTER: Approved by the Council 26 March 2025

1 Objective at risk: providing the local community with the opportunity to participate.

Date	Description of risk	Rating	Responsibility	Action
March 2014/ March 2018/ March 2024	Failure to attract sufficient candidates for member vacancies	very high	Members Clerk	- actively publicise Council activities - publicise vacancies on notice boards - publicise vacancies in Newsletter - publicise in local papers - publicise on website and village Facebook page
March 2014	Failure to achieve quorum at meetings	medium	Clerk	- issue annual meeting calendar to all members - issue meeting agendas promptly - maintain attendance register - contact members who fail to attend meetings
March 2014/ March 2018/ March 2024	Lack of public participation at meetings	high	Clerk	- ensure meetings publicised on notice boards, website and village Facebook page - place articles in local newspapers - include public participation on all agendas - ensure seating available at venue for public - provide advice for members of the public attending - publish agendas and minutes on website and village Facebook page
March 2014/ March 2024	Lack of public consultation by members	medium	Members	- maintain regular contact with local residents - publicise address and contact details - seek opinions through Newsletter - publicise important information on the news section of the Parish Council website and village Facebook page
March 2014	Members acting alone outside meetings	medium	Members	- obtain and read ‘Councillor Guide’ - avoid making commitments on behalf of the council - attend relevant training courses

March 2014	Bad publicity	high	Members	- have all press releases or newsletter articles reviewed by Chair or Vice Chair and Clerk before release - avoid speaking to the press outside meetings
March 2014	Allegations of libel or slander	medium	Members	- have all press releases or newsletter articles reviewed by Chair or Clerk before release - obtain insurance against possible actions
March 2014	Council decisions not implemented	medium	Members	- review minutes for confirmation of action - review Clerk's report for confirmation of action - review correspondence as necessary
March 2014	Inaccurate minutes	low	Members	- review and approve at next meeting
March 2014	Inadequate document control	low	Clerk	- obtain Chair's signature on approved minutes - retain signed minutes in minute book - maintain back-ups of all computer records - retain all records for required legal period

2 Objective at risk: providing such services as the local community wishes.

Date	Description of risk	Rating	Responsibility	Action
March 2014	Failure to correctly identify local needs or wishes	medium	Members	- maintain close contact with local residents - use meetings to obtain residents' feedback - use questionnaires, where appropriate, to identify local wishes - publicise plans and invite comments - review local papers, especially correspondence sections

3 Objective at risk: compliance with laws and regulations.

Date	Description of risk	Rating	Responsibility	Action
March 2014	Inadequate awareness of relevant legislation	very high	Members Clerk	- recruit suitably qualified staff - prepare comprehensive job description - attend available training courses - attend relevant conferences - maintain reference library - join NALC / LAPTC and use advice services - liaise with officers at Borough Council as appropriate - liaise with officers at County Council as appropriate - attend available training courses (especially CiLCA) - attend relevant conferences - maintain reference library - join SLCC and use advice services - subscribe to relevant magazines and journals - liaise with other clerks - liaise with officers at Borough Council as appropriate - liaise with officers at County Council as appropriate - seek advice when in any doubt
March 2014	Failure to comply with relevant legislation	high	Members Clerk	- periodically review all activities to ensure ongoing compliance - check legality of any decision when in doubt - maintain records of all decisions taken and cross reference to relevant legislation
March 2014	Failure to recognise and address conflict of interest	medium	Members	- obtain and review Code of Conduct - complete and sign 'Declaration of Interests' form - if in doubt, seek advice

4 Objective at risk: control over fixed assets.

Date	Description of risk	Rating	Responsibility	Action
March 2014	Failure to maintain fixed asset register	low	Clerk Members	- maintain and update fixed asset register - periodically review fixed asset register
March 2014	Burglary to Home of Clerk	low	Clerk	- ensure home is always locked when not occupied - ensure adequate locks are fitted
March 2014	Fire damage to Home of Clerk	low	Clerk	- ensure all office equipment is turned off when not in use - ensure smoke alarm is fitted and tested - ensure a suitable fire extinguisher is available - ensure electronic copies of Parish Council information are held off site at the home of the Chair and Vice Chair
March 2014 March 2020/ March 2024	Accidental damage to fixed assets	medium	Clerk Members/ Clerk	- obtain adequate insurance cover - Regular inspections of Appleton Fields to check for damage or risk to public safety - Regular attendance at Trustee meetings and monitoring of Appleton Fields Association to ensure compliance with lease agreement in place.
March 2014 March 2020/ March 2024	Vandalism to fixed assets	medium	Clerk Members/ Clerk	- obtain adequate insurance cover - implement regular asset inspection - implement scheduled maintenance programme - have playground equipment checked annually by RoSPA - undertake regular reviews of the play area by members of the Play Area Committee - Regular inspections of Appleton Fields to check for damage or risk to public safety - Regular attendance at Trustee meetings and monitoring of Appleton Fields Association to ensure compliance with lease agreement in place.

March 2014	Loss or harm to staff or to third parties	medium	Clerk	- regularly inspect all fixed assets from health & safety viewpoint - complete separate homeworking risk assessment - obtain adequate insurance cover - check insurance cover held by contractors working on council owned assets

5 Objective at risk: control over funds

Date	Description of risk	Rating	Responsibility	Action
March 2014	Failure to calculate / submit precept request on time	high	Members	- confirm submission dates with Borough Council - prepare draft budgets in adequate time - prepare and submit precept request in adequate time
March 2014	Failure to maintain proper accounting records	high	Members Clerk	- recruit suitably qualified Clerk - prepare comprehensive job description - periodically review accounting records - review reports from internal and external auditors - prepare and have approved accounting system - maintain all records up to date
March 2020	Failure to protect Parish Council funds in relation to electronic payments	high	Members Clerk	- Delegated decision in place to ensure that payments are only made after prior approval at either Parish Council meeting or by the Chair and Vice Chair - Review documentation provided by the Clerk as evidence of payments made if done electronically - Scan copies of all invoices and receipts and provide copy of bank statement or bank list of payments to provide evidence of payments made - Submit the proof of payments to Chair and Vice Chair

March 2014	Failure to account properly for income	medium	Members Clerk	- receive and review all reports of all income received - bank all cash income immediately - advise Council at next meeting of all receipts
March 2014	Failure to account properly for expenditure	medium	Members Clerk	- review annual budget calculation - periodically review expenditure against budget - inspect and authorise all invoices - restrict cheque signing authority - periodically review bank reconciliations - enter all invoice details into cash book immediately - maintain adequate analysis of all payments made by category - cross all reference payments to invoices - list all payments due at each meeting
March 2014	Failure to account for and recover VAT	low	Clerk	- maintain separate records of all VAT paid - submit completed claim to HMRC annually
March 2014	Failure to stay within agreed budgets	medium	Clerk Members	- maintain properly analysed records of all payments - produce regular variance analysis of payments against budget - periodically review variance analysis
March 2014	Holding excessive or inadequate reserves	medium	Members	- calculate anticipated reserves position at the end of each financial year and review for adequacy / appropriateness
March 2014	Failure to complete / submit Annual Return on time	low	Clerk	- check and diarise cut-off dates for submission of annual Return to external auditors - ensure that accounts are prepared in adequate time for submission
March 2014	Fraud by Clerk	high	Members	- recruit suitably qualified Clerk, after checking references as appropriate - periodically review accounts - periodically review bank reconciliations - receive and review reports by internal and external auditors - obtain adequate insurance cover
March 2014	Fraud by Members	medium	Clerk	- restrict access to cheque books - review and reconcile bank accounts on receipt

March 2014	Failure to achieve best value	low	Members	- ensure that there is a documented purchasing policy - issue tenders of all major purchases
March 2015	Absence of Clerk leading to work not being carried out	Low/med	Members	- Insurance cover in place but only useful if absence due to clear and specific reasons - Hold adequate reserves to cover cost for emergency cover, advertising and appointment of new clerk (6 months wages) - Key information/passwords shared with Chair/Vice Chair
March 2015	Failure to keep documents stored electronically safe and secure	Medium	Clerk	- Information backed up every month and two electronic copies stored off site from Clerks home, only accessible with a password.
March 2015	Failure to maintain confidentiality	Medium	Clerk & Cllrs	- Members reminded that documents that contain sensitive information should be destroyed when no longer needed. Members reminded regularly regarding sensitive documents
March 2024	Maintenance of Parish Council website	Medium	Clerk & Cllrs	- A new website is now in operation which complies with Accessibility regulations and is easier for residents to use. - The website will be regularly updated by the Clerk, but three other Parish Councillors will also have access to update in the event of any Clerk absence. - There are clear instructions on how to maintain the website and Parish Online will provide any other additional support required. -