

South Petherton Parish Council

Risk Assessment 2026/27

Resolved by Council on: 13th May 2026
 Next Review Date: May 2027

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential inherent risks. The Parish Council, based on a recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

This document has been produced to enable South Petherton Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

Financial and Management					
Subject	Area of Risk	H / M / L	Management / control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise	Responsibility
1. Insurance	a. General adequacy	L	The insurance arrangements are reviewed fully on a three year basis within interim annual checking. Review of risk and adequacy of cover (loss/damage, public liability, consequential loss and fidelity guarantee) should be conducted annually. Full review of renewal costs every three years – next 2028	Check limits annually and review full policy every three years.	Clerk & Councillors
	b. Cost	L			
	c. Compliance	L			
	d. Public Liability (statutory)	L	Insurance at £10,000,000.00		Clerk & Councillors

Financial and Management					
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	e. Employers Liability	L	Insurance at £10,000,000.00		Clerk & Councillors
	f. Money	L	Insurance at £250,000		Clerk & Councillors
	g. Fidelity guarantee	M	Insurance at £545,000.00		Clerk & Councillors
	h. Property	L	2 x Chapels - £361,977 Pavilion - £670,173 Youth Building - £719,051 Playground equipment - £386,719 Street Furniture - £34,208		Clerk & Councillors
	i. Libel and Slander	L	Insurance at £10,000,000.00	Consider an Excess reserve	Clerk & Councillors
	j. Personal Accident	L	Insurance at £100,000 (death, loss of limbs/eyes) Temporary total disability - £500 per week		Clerk & Councillors
	k. Excess	L	£250	Consider setting to be set aside as a Reserve in case of a claim. Amount currently in earmarked reserves.	Clerk & Councillors
2. Precept	a. Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its statutory duties	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Council receives regular budget update information. At the precept meeting, Council receives a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the year end and indicative figures obtained by the Clerk. With this information, the	Information supplied quarterly with precept budget process starting in Sept.	Clerk & Councillors

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			<p>Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to the budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Somerset Council. The figure is then submitted by the Clerk in writing.</p> <p>The Clerk informs the Council when the monies are agreed and received.</p>		
3. Budget Provision and Reserves	a. insufficient available funds	L	A full budget needs to be submitted prior to the precept request. This should include funds placed in a reserve for future projects a contingency fund and three months running costs.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
4. Best Value Accountability	a. work awarded incorrectly	L	Normal parish practice would be to seek (where possible), 3 quotations for any substantial work undertaken. For major work, competitive tenders must be sought. If problems were encountered with a contract, the Clerk would investigate the situation and report back to the Council.	Procedure in Financial Regulations	Clerk & Councillors
	b. Overspend on services	M		Procedure in Financial Regulations	Clerk & Councillors
5. Contracts and contractors	a. maintenance contractors	M	Initial contracts are awarded for 12 months. Subject to satisfactory performance, subsequent contracts are for three years.	Report on performance and review when appropriate.	Clerk & Councillors

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6. Payroll, salary & pension	a. HMRC RTI Information submit within time limit	L	Salary, pension and HMRC payments are outsourced to an official payroll company specialising in Parish Councils. Information is input by them to HMRC and reports are received confirming payments to be made by the council on a monthly basis. Clerk pays these and confirms details at monthly PC meetings. Clerk confirms with payroll company pensions submission.	Current adequate procedure	Clerk & Councillors
	b. HMRC End of the Year Submission / P60 – submit within time limit. Pension regulator submission completed by payroll company	L		Current adequate procedure	Clerk & Councillors
	c. Salary paid incorrectly	L	Salary agreed and paid monthly with 2 Cllr's checks in place.		Councillors
	d. Unpaid tax to HMRC	L	Monitored by payroll company and advised if any shortcomings.		Clerk
7. Employees	a. Fraud by staff	L	Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance adhered to with regards to fraud.	Current adequate procedures	Clerk & Councillors
	b. Health and Safety	L	All employees (Clerk & Deputy) to be provided with adequate direction & safety equipment needed to undertake their role.	Monitor H&S requirements and insurance annually	Clerk & Councillors
	c. Clerk resignation / sickness	L	Deputy Clerk may act temporarily as the Clerk/RFO for 4 weeks. Should the absence be any longer than this, then the Council should employ a locum. Councillors may also act in a temporary capacity at nil pay for a maximum of 4 weeks.	Review contingency in budget annually	Clerk & Councillors

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			Contingency required for locum, advertising sickness cover etc		
8. Bank and Banking	a. Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
	b. Bank mistakes	L	Monthly reconciliations to take place to identify any issues.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
	c. Cheque/BACS mistakes	L	<p>BACS payments to be entered onto the banking system by the Clerk, on receipt of invoices.</p> <p>List of payments to be made are reported on the agenda and invoices are viewed at the authorising meeting in person or can be added to the website for councillors to view virtually.</p> <p>Once payments are agreed by the council, the authorising cllrs (at least 2) cross reference the agreed invoices, to the banking system, and use them to confirm the payments to be made match are correct to those agreed by council.</p> <p>Payments are made, and the 2 authorising councillors sign the payment sheet to confirm their checks.</p> <p>Cheques are no longer used – but in the rare occasion that it might be the only option -cheques to be written by the Clerk following inspection of the</p>	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Bank/Cheque signatories.

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			invoices and signed by two councillors, agreed at the PC meeting. Cheque, cheque counterfoil and invoice to be signed or initialled.		
	e. Non Performance / Delivery of third parties	L	Avoid pre-payments wherever possible & vet suppliers thoroughly	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
9. Financial Reporting	a. Information communication	L	Financial information is a regular agenda item (Finance report) a discussed/reviewed and approved at each meeting. Further details provided at interim intervals and to the F&GP Committee.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
	b. Annual accounts	L	Accounts to be closed at Year End 31 st March and final statement to submitted to full Council meeting for scrutiny and agreement. Clerk/RFO & Chair to sign off.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk, Chair & Councillors
10. Financial Records	a. Inadequate records	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
	b. Financial irregularities	L	The Council has a Finance & General Purpose Committee who meet & inspect the finances records regularly. These are signed off on a regular basis. Any irregularities should be identified on inspection.	Ensure bank statements and reconciliations are being reviewed & signed off.	Clerk & F&GP committee.
11. Grants	a. Receipt of grant	L	Ensure all grants applied or entitled to are received in a timely manner	Review quarterly.	Clerk

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			and to have clear record of receipt & credit to the council.		
	b. Payment of grants and power to pay	L	Ensure that the funds are acceptable to pay under S137 or General Power of Competence. All expenditure goes through the existing required Council process of approval, minutes and listing accordingly if a payment is made using S137 power of expenditure.	Ensure S137 payments are recorded correctly in minutes and under budget heading.	Clerk & Councillors
12. Charges – rents receivable	a. payment of rents	L	Invoices to be sent to tenants / allotment holders at the beginning of April for that financial year. Any non-payment to be brought to the councils attention. Clerk reviews this quarterly and sends reminder letters on non payment.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
13. VAT	a. reclaiming	L	Claims submitted quarterly using form 126 & copies kept. Clerk ensures receipt of payment from HMRC. The order must have been placed by the Council, invoice made out to the Council and the payment made from Council funds. In circumstances where a large amount of VAT has been paid, the Clerk may use discretion to claim monthly and will advise council accordingly.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk

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	b. charging	L	The Council is not registered for VAT as it does not make any VATable supplies.	Existing procedures adequate	-
14. Audit	a. Annual return – complete and publish within time limits	L	External Audit Annual Return (AGAR) completed by the internal auditor and then completed and signed & minuted by the Chair & Clerk/RFO by the dates issues by the external auditors and published on the website.	Procedures issued annually by external auditor (currently PKF Littlejohn) & followed each year.	Clerk & Chair
	b. Public inspection of documents	L	Published within & for the regulatory timescales. By appointment only, at the Parish Office. For the safety of the RFO/Clerk, the public are welcome to inspect documents, but with the other Clerk or a Councillor present.	Existing Procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
	c. Internal audit	L	Appoint a qualified independent internal auditor. Appointment confirmed and minuted.	Existing procedure adequate	Councillors (with advice from Clerk)
	d. Review of effectiveness of audit	L	The Council must review its requirements of the internal audit, including scope, independence, competence relationships and planning following the completion of the internal audit.	Existing procedure adequate.	Councillors
15. Legal powers	a. illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved at full council meetings.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors

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16. Minutes / agenda / notices and statutory documents	a. accuracy and legality	L	Minutes are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerks and adhere to the legal requirements including publishing on the SPPC website. Minutes are circulated in advance of the meeting, approved and signed at the next council or committee meeting.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk
	b. standing orders	L	Last adopted in May 2025	Reviewed annually.	Council
	c. financial regulations	L	Last adopted in May 2025	Reviewed annually.	Council
	d. business conduct	L	Agendas displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at council meetings is managed by the Chair.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk & Chair
17. Council records	a. paper	L	Loss through fire, theft, damage. Council records are stored in the Parish Office and in secure storage, or transferred to Somerset Archives in Taunton. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records, cemetery records.	Damage & theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate.	Clerk & Council
	b. electronic	M	The council's electronic records are stored on the 2 council laptops and held remotely via computer support. Data is constantly backed up through this, and all systems are password protected.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk

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			Computer support also provides antivirus protection.		
18. Data protection	a. policy provision	L	The council is registered with the Information Commissioner	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
	b. Data protection officer	L	Parish councils are not required to have a named Data Protection Officer.	Review annually	Clerk
	c. GDPR	L	Policies are in place for Data Protection, Freedom of Information & Document Retention & these have been adopted. GDPR training has been taken by the Clerk and Cllrs are provided with GDPR training slides.	Review annually	Council
19. Freedom of information and environmental information regulations	a. policy	L	The Council has a model publication scheme in place & records any requests made.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk
	b. provision	L	The Council is aware that if a substantial/large volume of requests came in it could create a number of additional hours work & also has a vexatious complaints policy in place if needed.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk & Council
20. Councillors	a. Losing a councillor	M	When a vacancy arises there is a legal process to follow which leads to either a by-election or co-option process. The more usual is co-option, which starts with an advert, acceptance of applications,	Existing procedures adequate.	Clerk & Council

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			consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting. The Council tries to draw members from around the parish to make sure each area is represented.		
	b. Losing more than ten Councillors to make the Council inquorate	H	If there are any more than ten vacancies at any one time, the council becomes inquorate and Somerset Council will take over the running of the Council at the parish's expense.	Currently 15 Cllrs in May 2026.	Clerk & Council
21. Election costs	a. risk of an election cost	L	Risk is higher in an election year (2027) The council sets aside a sum each year to a maximum of £1,000 in case of an election. Amount now in earmarked reserves.	Existing procedure is adequate for the four yearly elections but inadequate in the unlikely event of a standalone by-election.	-
22. Members interests and code of conduct	a. conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest by members at Council meetings. Legally councillors need only declare 'pecuniary interests', but many choose to declare other interests and withdraw from discussion if necessary. All interests are recorded.	Existing procedure adequate	Councillors
	b. code of conduct	L	The Code is re-adopted each year, and given to each councillor on election to Office.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk & Councillors
	c. register of members interests	M	Councillors must complete a form on election which must be sent to	Review annually	Councillors

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			Somerset Council for publication on their website. A copy is also kept in the Parish Office. Councillors are responsible for ensuring that their own register of members interests is kept up to date.		
23. Council meetings	a. recording of meetings	M	Members of the public & press are requested to inform the Chair if they wish to record the meeting. The Parish Council will also make a recording if necessary.		Chair

Physical equipment or Areas – Assets					
Subject	Location	H / M / L	Management / control of risk	Review / Assess / revise	Responsibility
1. Filing cabinets	Parish Office	L	Ensure location is secure with controlled code access.	Check room regularly for any damage or issues that will affect storage.	Clerk
2. Bus shelters	Harp Road.	M	Physical condition monitored. Damage reported at meetings Security not possible	Sufficient checks in place.	Clerk / Maintenance
3. War memorial	South Petherton Churchyard	L	Security not possible	Regular checks	Councillors
4. Benches	1. Outside Chemist (square)	M	All secured by bolts/screws etc. Regular monitoring, annual maintenance & repair or replacement	Regular checks	Councillors

Physical equipment or Areas – Assets					
Subject	Location	H / M / L	Management / control of risk	Review / Assess / revise	Responsibility
	2. Recreation Ground – by play area 3. Mare Lane 4. Community Woodland 5. Cemetery 6. Vaux Bridge 7. Memorial Garden (Rec)		as deemed necessary using companies/ personnel deemed qualified by the council. Damage reported at meetings	Quarterly. Open spaces checked regularly by ranger. Memorial Garden upkeep currently volunteers.	
5. Cemetery Chapels	Cemetery	M	Very old buildings which require ongoing maintenance and care.	Monthly inspection	Clerk / Council
6. Wall	1. Churchyard 2. Cemetery wall adjacent to A303 3. St James St Car Park wall	M	Six monthly inspection Funds set aside in EMR to allow in the case of sudden cemetery wall failure and subsequent closure of A303.	Existing procedure adequate	Council
7. Waste bins	Harp Road Cemetery x 4 Recreation Ground x4	M	Physical condition monitored & emptied weekly. Damage reported at meetings Security not possible BIFFA contract in place to remove big blue bins at Recreation Ground.	Sufficient checks in place	Clerk / Maintenance
8. Dog waste bins	-	L	Responsibility of Somerset Council.	-	-
9. Grit bins	a. Recreation ground b. Corner of South St/bottom of Knapp Hill.	L	Annual inspection held in July. Ensure filled with salt – unlikely to now be provided from SC due to the	Plan to be made for distribution of salt in adverse weather.	Clerk / Councillors

Physical equipment or Areas – Assets					
Subject	Location	H / M / L	Management / control of risk	Review / Assess / revise	Responsibility
	c. Blake Hall d. Junction of Palmer St/Summershard e. approach to Vaux Bridge		councils financial issues so SPPC will need to provide this going forward.		
10. Noticeboards	a. Blake Hall b. Recreation Ground c. Over Stratton d. Wigborough e. Compton Durville	L	Inspected monthly Annual maintenance & repair/replacement as required using personnel deemed qualified by the Council. Damage reported at next meeting	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk / Councillors
11. Defibrillator	a. Blake Hall b. Pavilion c. Over Stratton	L	Inspected monthly and report made to The Circuit. Replacement pads and batteries checked and replaced according to 'use by' dates.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk / Councillors
12. Trees	Village inspection – to include trees of note: a. Oak by Scout Hut (following pollarding) b. Large Trees in Cemetery c. Trees around edge of Recreation Ground	M/H	Three yearly inspection made by certified Arborist company Action taken on their recommendations. Visual ongoing inspections by ranger.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk / Councillors
13. Land	a. Recreation Ground b. Whitfield Lane c. Whitfield Lane Allotments	L	Regular inspections of land.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk / Councillors

Physical equipment or Areas – Assets					
Subject	Location	H / M / L	Management / control of risk	Review / Assess / revise	Responsibility
	d. Pitway Allotment land e. Community Woodland				
14. Maintenance of land and assets	Village Wide: Grass cutting Verge cutting Tree / Hedge pruning Footpath clearance	M	Covered by contractors (public liability confirmed) & Somerset Council. Ensure all new undertakings include indemnity of the Council.	New Parish Maintenance role created June 2024 to replace the Village Ranger role from Somerset Council.	Clerk / Councillors
15. Recreation Ground Play equipment	a. Children's play area equipment b. MUGA c. Cricket Nets	M	Checked by PC, quarterly by Somerset Council & also annual inspection by RoSPA certified inspectors.	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk / Councillors
16. Cemetery	Issues include: a. headstones b. driveway c. Chapels d. Ground subsidence	M	Checked weekly and any issues reported. Issues with memorials/headstones reported to owners or PR's of.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk / Councillors