

SEVERN STOKE AND CROOME D'ABITOT PARISH COUNCIL – WORCESTERSHIRE

Risk Management Policy

Published by SLCC 2025. Compiled January 2026 by Parish Clerk. Yet to be formally adopted by PC.

1. **Introduction** This document sets out: • What risk management is • Why the Parish Council needs a risk management policy • Risk management policy statement • The risk management process • Roles and responsibilities • Future monitoring
2. **The objectives of this policy are to:** • Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Parish Council • Integrate risk management into the culture of the organisation • Manage risk in accordance with best practice.

3. What Risk Management is

3.1 'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.' Audit Commission, *Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government*, (2001: 5)

3.2 Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety, but applies to all aspects of the Parish Council's work.

3.3 Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive:

- Financial – loss of money
- Security – fraud, theft, embezzlement
- Property – damage to property
- Legal – breaking the law or being sued
- IT – failure or misuse of IT systems
- Reputational – actions taken could harm the authority's public reputation

3.4 Not all of these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost effective. Even where insurance is available, a monetary consideration might not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

3.5 Risk is not restricted to potential threats but can be connected with missed opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive responses. Measures to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

4. Why the Parish Council needs a Risk Management Policy

4.1 Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Parish Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided. The Risk Management Policy will help to ensure that all Committees, Working Groups and staff have an understanding of risk and that the Parish Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance.

5. Risk Management Policy Statement

5.1 This Parish Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its aims and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.

5.2 The Parish Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a policy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk. Risk management is an integral part of the Parish Council's management processes.

6. Implementing the Policy

6.1 Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures, but in exceptional cases more drastic action may be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

6.2 Options for control include:

- a. Elimination – the circumstances from which the risk arises are removed so that the risk no longer exists
- b. Reduction – control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/ likelihood
- c. Transfer – the financial impact is passed to others
- d. Sharing – the risk is shared with another party
- e. Insuring – insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact
- f. Acceptance – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Parish Council accepts or tolerates risk

7. Risk Register

7.1 The Risk Register will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Finance, Risk and Compliance Committee and reported to Full Council. The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or

minimised in the future. It will also help to inform on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

Topics covered by our risk register: (order is as per historical creation, not by any assessed risk)

- Insurance
- Bus Shelters
- Noticeboards
- Litter bins
- Finance
- Record keeping
- Freedom of Information
- GDPR
- Contractors and footpath wardens
- Members/councillors
- Clerk as employee
- Meeting rooms
- Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)
- Lengthsman

8. Risk Management System

8.1 Risk Identification – identifying and understanding the risks facing the Parish Council is crucial if informed decisions are to be made about policies or service delivery methods. The risks associated with these decisions can then be effectively managed.

8.2 Risk Analysis – once risks have been identified they need to be systematically and accurately assessed.

8.3 Risk Prioritisation - an assessment should be undertaken of the impact and likelihood of risks occurring, with impact and likelihood being scored negligible (1), low (2), medium (3) and high (4)

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance of the Parish Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below, are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively right across the Council and its operations, and responsibility for risk is located in the right place.

9.2 Councillors – risk management is seen as a key part of Councillors’ stewardship role and there is an expectation that Councillors will lead and monitor the approach adopted, including:

- i) Approval of the Risk Management Policy
- ii) Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects and services undertaken are adequately risk managed
- iii) Assessment of risks whilst setting the budget, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues

9.3 The Clerk – will act as the lead on risk management and will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Risk Management Policy and reporting on risks identified.

9.4 Role of Internal Audit – Internal Audit provides an important scrutiny role by carrying out audits to provide independent assurance to the Parish Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively.

9.5 Internal Audit assists the Parish Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud.

9.6 In addition to the roles and responsibilities set out above, the Parish Council is keen to promote an environment within which individuals and groups are encouraged to report adverse incidents promptly and openly.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The adoption of a sound risk management approach will assist in demonstrating that the Parish Council is committed to continuous service improvement and effective corporate governance.

Footnote:

Parish Clerk, Proper Officer & Responsible Financial Officer Mrs Lisa Stevens, CiLCA, c/o 9 The Limes, Kempsey, Worcs, WR5 3LG.

Tel: 01905 820956 / 07950256363

Email: parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk

Requests for this information in other languages/audio/large print will be reasonably considered.



View our new parish council website via the Q R Code above or at

<https://severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk/>

Our parish council logo shows the Panorama Tower at Severn Stoke, offering views of the surrounding countryside to the public. Image recreated with permission of the National Trust.