BADGER PARISH COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW – SEPTEMBER 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Risk Management is the process whereby the Council methodically addresses the risks associated with what it does, and the services which it provides. Councillors are ultimately responsible for risk management because it threatens the achievement of aims and objectives. In this Review Councillors are asked to consider to:

* Take steps to identify and where necessary update key risks facing the Council.
* Evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place.
* Decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control risk consequences, and
* Record conclusions and decisions reached.
1. RISK AREAS This Review takes into account the financial, physical and environmental issues under the following three headings:
2. Areas where there may be scope to use insurance to help management risk
* Asset insurance is provided for asset protection and legal liabilities.
* Full insurance has been arranged through brokers Came & Company for an agreement with Pen Writing Limited on a term of three years which commenced on 26th June 2020. Insurance includes £10 million each for Employers Liability and Public Liability.
* The Council has internal controls for an up-to-date register of assets and investments. There is regular oversight for any need of repairs and maintenance for the Council’s physical assets which are a bus shelter, a notice board, two foldable tables, four road signs, a marquee, a brazier, and a defibrillator with an associated cabinet box. The Council uses a privately owned adapted telephone kiosk for housing the defibrillator under an agreement costing a nominal £1.00 a year on the understanding that the Council maintains and insures the kiosk.
* Since the last Review the Council has refurbished its public notice board. At the present time no asset needs any special maintenance attention.
* To secure better safety and control of traffic.
* The market value of the Council’s assets has been reviewed in line with the current retail price index increase of 2.4%. Th estimated present market value of the Council’s assets total £20,229. The insurance cover for street furniture and other outside equipment totals £37,691, so satisfactorily meets costs for repairs and replacements.
* Councillors continue to voluntarily maintain the highway grass verges in the centre of Badger village, and it has been confirmed that Councillors and any other volunteers are fully insured for this activity.
* There is satisfactory security maintenance for the Council’s property, such as storing tables in the local Parish Church and having a lockable panel for Council matters.

2. Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk

- The “Smartwater” Scheme, overseen by the police, aims to prevent domestic theft was offered to all households in the Parish and most households are using it. – The Council continues to employ a contractor to twice a year cut the grass highway verges in lanes in the Parish outside the centre of Badger village. --Banking arrangements with statements & correspondence is under the control of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) who is also the Clerk to Council. Four of the five Councillors plus the Clerk are signatories to the Council’s bank accounts. Following local elections in May 2021 arrangements will be made to have all five Councillors as signatories. - Council retain sufficient general reserves of funds, including some in a second bank account to meet contingencies. Due to the Internal Auditor in April 2020, querying the high amount of reserves Council has agreed to ensure they did not become excessive. – Under the current terms of banking at Barclays Bank the Council only uses cash or cheques in transactions as it is unable to have a bank card as Barclays do not provide cards where two signatures are required on cheques. – Regular bank and cash reconciliations with separate checks on accounts takes place during the year. In the light of restrictions due to the Covid-19 crisis arrangements will be made for a Councillor to be nominated to conduct an examination of the accounts by October 2020, that complied with the pandemic regulations. - Standing Orders which incorporate Financial Regulations are reviewed annually as are procedures and policies such as that to comply with the Data Protection Regulations. - Where a situation arises that is not covered by Council procedures and practices guidance will be sought by referral to model policies of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). - Due to the Pandemic there have been no face-to-face meetings of Council since January 2020, or with other associated bodies. The Council takes into account the need to encourage its Members and parishioners to adhere to the Government guidelines to help prevent the coronavirus from spreading. When face-to face meetings of Council can be arranged when the virus has subsided but not extinguished a special risk assessment will be prepared. - A contract continues with Numbers Plus Telephone System for use in the AED (Defibrillator) Scheme. – The Proper Officer (The Clerk to Council) ensures that the Council complies with the Smaller Local Authorities (Transparency Requirements) Regulations, and that all appropriate data is displayed on the Council’s web site.

- To secure improved safety and control of traffic through Badger village negotiations are underway with Shropshire Council for further road signs of varying nature at appropriate locations.

3) Areas where there may be a need to self-manage risk

The Council’s internal and other controls include: - Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for approval of expenditure, which includes payments of the Clerk’s salary, expenses and Income Tax that are all paid quarterly. – Due to the low amounts involved refunds of VAT are only claimed every two years. The next claim will be for the period 1/4/20 to 31/3/22. – Minutes of meetings are properly numbered with the Clerk keeping both a paper master copy and one on computer file. – Any changes in Law & Regulation reported by NALC affecting the running of the Council are promptly implemented. – Proper procedures are conducted to record and monitor Members’ interests in the attendance boo and in the minutes of Council meetings. - The Clerk ensures that where relevant the data Protection Regulations are followed. - An appropriate system of recording and handling enquiries is in place, which includes a manuscript book of telephone calls, and filed hard copies in the Clerk’s computer folder for Badger. - Historical records of the Council’s activities are retained at Shropshire Archives. - Council is currently arranging for an overhaul of its web site to allow for the latest suitable IT amenities which will facilitate improved performance of the Councils functions. – In the light of the Covid-19 crisis Council will take measures to ensure it properly complies with Government Regulations relating to preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Council will therefore conduct virtual meetings when necessary and has given the Chairman in conjunction with the Clerk authority to perform certain functions normally considered by full Council.

c. CONCLUSION Council is asked to consider this report, take any action for perceived omissions and confirm this Review has assessed that risks, financial, physical and environmental are being satisfactorily managed.

David Voysey Responsible Finance Officer 3rd September 2020