

King's Somborne Parish Council – Business Continuity Plan

Introduction

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on a local authority to ensure that it is prepared as far as reasonably practical to continue to provide important functions and services in the event of disruption.

Whilst this is not a statutory duty for a parish council it is King's Somborne Parish Council's (KSPC) intention to recognise the importance of producing and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan for implementation in the event of disruptions to the day to day running of KSPC.

The plan identifies the instances of potential disruption, suggested mitigation, action in the case of disruption, and financial risk to the budget.

A business continuity plan has been produced to ensure that the Council can operate during unexpected or tragic circumstances.

Core Business of King's Somborne Parish Council

The parish council provides local services to its parishioners which includes the provision of:

- 1) Grounds Maintenance – Open Public Spaces.
- 2) Playground and Fitness Equipment – Safety Checks and Repairs.
- 3) Fixed Assets Checks and Repairs – All Assets listed on the Fixed Assets Register, other than in (2) above.
- 4) SIDs – Moved to an agreed programme, batteries charged and operating.
- 5) Footpaths and Highway verges – Maintenance in partnership with HCC and TVBC via the Parish Lengthsman.
- 6) Cemetery – Grounds maintenance, interments, new memorials and additional inscriptions; and the maintenance of the closed churchyard.
- 7) Planning Applications – Acting as a consultee, representing parish interests. Council representation at TVBC Committees and Appeals.
- 8) Council Finances – Paying contractors & invoices timely; staff salaries and HMRC payments, year-end accounts & AGAR, reviewing documents required for audit, budget management, processing grants, managing third party finances e.g., the Playing Field & Recreation Ground Charity and Mini-Bus Accounts.
- 9) Full Council Meetings – Matters brought to the Council for consideration; recording and undertaking resolved actions.
- 10) Day to day work of the Clerk & Proper Officer (and RFO):
 - a) First point of contact for the public, councils and contractors etc. Day-to-day and emergency matters that affect the parish.
 - b) Managing the Council's post, e-mails and telephone calls
 - c) Communication via website, parish magazine, social media, and noticeboards.
 - d) Duties as applicable to sections 1 to 9 above, plus any other duties undertaken by the Clerk as needed.

Potential causes of disruption:

- 1) Damage or disruption caused by weather related problems, including fire, storms, floods and snow.
- 2) Damage caused by vandalism, theft, breakage or wear and tear.
- 3) Loss of staff, contractors or volunteers through illness, injury or resignation.
- 4) Loss of Councillors leaving the Council inquorate and/or leaving volunteer roles unattended.
- 5) Loss of Council records through theft, fire or corruption of files.

Risk Management

1	Grounds Maintenance – Open Public Spaces, Churchyard and Cemetery			
	Activity Risk:	Mitigation:	Action Agreed:	Financial Risk:
1a	Grounds Maintenance Grounds Maintenance Contractor unable to fulfil contract due to e.g., long term sickness or resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk – list of contractors potentially able to assist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors advise Clerk of areas that require attention. Clerk arranges repair in line with financial regulations and delegated authority. 	Low: Contractor fees for one-off cuts are likely to be higher than the annual costs agreed, though the on-going budget will contribute towards the costs.
1b	Gang Mowing Gang Mowing Contractor unable to fulfil contract. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk – list of contractors potentially able to assist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk liaises with Football and Cricket Clubs regarding the urgency of immediate cuts. Short Term: Clerk requests Grounds Maintenance Contractor cut at his hourly rate. Long Term: Clerk seeks quotations for a new gang mowing contractor. 	Low: Contractor fees for one-off cuts are likely to be higher than the annual costs agreed, though the on-going budget will contribute towards the costs Immediate Action: Stop the Direct Debit
2	Playground and Fitness Equipment and Recreation Grounds – Safety Checks and Repairs			
	Activity Risk:	Mitigation:	Action Agreed:	Financial Risk:
2a	Playground & Fitness Equipment & Recreation Grounds – Routine Visual Weekly Safety Checks Councillors and/or Volunteers – Resignation or Sickness Risk: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 or 3 Councillors / Volunteers willing to train / obtain experience, enabling continuity of checks in an emergency. 1-day training from a qualified inspector available, in consideration of experience. Councillors to request the clerk arrange on an as-needs basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term: Support requested from pool of volunteers. If no one able to support within three weeks, the Clerk seeks costs for Routine Visual Weekly Safety Checks from local companies. Long Term: Council advertises and appoints councillor or volunteer. 	Low: Playground Inspection costs only if no local volunteers.
2b	Playground & Fitness Equipment – Six Monthly Safety Checks Appointed Safety Inspector resigns or is unable to undertake agreed safety checks. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the Council currently prefers 6-monthly checks, the recommended minimum is annual. Clerk has access to the RPPI's list of inspectors on their website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk seeks quotations from Inspectors registered with the RPPI (Registered Play Inspectors International) to undertake 'annual playground safety checks' at intervals agreed by the Council. 	Low: Likely costs included within the budget.

3	Fixed Assets – Checks and Repairs – All Assets listed on the Fixed Assets Register, other than in (2) above.			
	<u>Activity Risk:</u>	<u>Mitigation:</u>	<u>Action Agreed:</u>	<u>Financial Risk:</u>
3a	Fixed Assets – Annual Checks Theft, wear & tear, accidental damage or vandalism occurs between the annual checks. Risk: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the annual Asset Register checks, councillors review assets when passing and report any damage to the Clerk. Annual checks to be undertaken in June, reported to the July meeting as a standing item. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor takes photographs and advise Clerk on the loss or damage. Clerk advises the police and/or insurance company if applicable. Clerk requests the Councillors maintenance contractor undertake repairs, or seeks quotes and arranges repair in line with the financial regulations and delegated authority. 	Low: Sums are budgeted to cover a general level of repair. Future insurance quotations may be impacted.
4	SIDs – Moved fortnightly to an agreed programme, batteries charged and operating.			
	<u>Activity Risk</u>	<u>Mitigation:</u>	<u>Action Agreed:</u>	<u>Financial Risk:</u>
4a	SIDS – Moved fortnightly, batteries charged & operating. Contractor unable to fulfil the contract, temporarily, e.g., through sickness, or permanently e.g., resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contract requires the contractor to sub-contract the work agreed and advise the Clerk so that Council knows who will be working on the equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor unable to fulfil the contract temporarily: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action – Contractor to sub-contract Contractor resigns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk to obtain quotations for a new Contractor, for Council. 	Low: Likely costs included within the budget.
5	Footpaths and Highway verges – Maintenance in partnership with HCC and TVBC via the Parish Lengthsman			
	<u>Activity Risk</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Action Agreed</u>	<u>Financial Risk</u>
5a	Maintenance of Footpaths & Highway Verges - Lengthsman Budget exceeded prior to year-end. Risk: High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lengthsman's Working Group aware of the footpath cut by HCC and the highway verges cut by TVBC under contract to HCC. The Lengthsman is not asked to cut these areas. Annual priorities to be agreed in consideration of the budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work can be requested near year-end without budget, but only with a commitment that it will be paid by invoice. 	Medium: No specific budget for work over budget. This year the small sum over can be covered from the 'services & projects' general maintenance cost centre. The hourly cost for 2023/24 is increasing. The budget

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk monitors the budget and updates the Working Group to enable prioritisation. Problems identified of an urgent nature, for which HCC or TVBC is responsible, are reported to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC – by anyone via the 'report a problem' page. TVBC – by the Clerk 		<p>provided by HCC is not increasing.</p> <p>There is a risk that at some point this grant will no longer be available.</p> <p>The Council to consider adding a sum to cover these scenarios to the annual budget/precept.</p>
5b	Maintenance of Footpaths & Highway Verges - Lengthsman Lengthsman unable to fulfil contract, temporarily e.g., through sickness or permanently e.g., through resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Parish Council leads the annual contract. Lead Parish Council advises participating Councils when work is delayed and the action to be taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work temporarily delayed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor undertakes asap. Work delayed for a longer period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor sub-contracts. 	Medium: Responsibility with HCC. Work prioritised to agreed budgets. No specific budget set aside over HCC's £1000 allowance.
6	Cemetery – Grounds maintenance, interments, new memorials and additional inscriptions; and the maintenance of the closed churchyard			
	<u>Activity Risk:</u>	<u>Mitigation:</u>	<u>Action Agreed:</u>	<u>Financial Risk:</u>
6a	Grounds Maintenance Grounds Maintenance Contractor unable to fulfil contract due to e.g., long term sickness or resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk – list of contractors potentially able to assist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors supporting with the cemetery and churchyard advise on grounds maintenance priorities. Clerk arranges work to be undertaken by other contractors, in line with financial regulations and delegated authority. 	Medium: Contractor fees for one-off cuts are likely to be higher than the annual costs agreed, though the on-going budget will contribute towards the costs.
6b	Interments & Memorials Clerk unable to liaise with Funeral Directors and Memorial Stonemasons due to long-term sickness or resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk – a summary of the process to be published on the shared drive, so that it can be picked up by a Councillor, in an emergency, or by a Locum Clerk. To include contact details for support and advice. Likelihood of an interment, a new memorial or additional inscription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair makes arrangement for the collection of the Clerk's laptop, to enable e-mails to be monitored and communication undertaken with the Funeral Directors and Memorial Stonemasons. Steels and AH Cheater, the two most used Funeral Directors to be advised of the Clerk's absence 	High: If covering for sickness, the cost of a Locum Clerk will be in addition to the Clerk's Salary.

		needing to be arranged within the Clerk's annual leave period is very low.	and provided an alternative telephone number. • This work to be incorporated in the work requested of a Locum Clerk.	
7	Planning Applications – Acting as a consultee, representing parish interests. Council representation at TVBC Committees & Appeals.			
	<u>Activity Risk:</u>	<u>Mitigation:</u>	<u>Action Agreed:</u>	<u>Financial Risk:</u>
7a	Planning Committee Meetings - Members Multiple resignations or sickness of Planning Committee Members resulting in a meeting potentially not being quorate. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing Orders allow any member of the Council to be summonsed to attend if the Clerk is aware that the meeting may not be quorate. The Clerk to have a list of those most likely available. All Councillors to gain a basic understanding of the planning process. Extraordinary Planning Committee meetings are arranged between the monthly meetings, on an as needs basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further to being advised by Committee members of their inability to attend, the Clerk will check availability and summons other members. The agenda to be forwarded to all summonsed. Councillors to research applications using 'planning portal' and consider the site prior to the meeting. 	No Risk: No additional costs
7b	Planning Committee Meetings – Factors external to Council Planning Application closing dates fall in a period of 'lock-down', period of mourning, or for another reason e.g., dates fall in the summer when Clerk &/or members are on leave, meaning it is not possible or difficult for the Planning Committee to meet. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Authority given to the Clerk to make planning decisions representing parish interests, further to consultation via zoom with members of the planning committee, and/or other council members if planning committee members available number less than three. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Authority is only to be used as a last resort, with the recommendation of three members of the Planning Committee, including the Chair if available, or three members of Council if Planning Committee members available to consult with total less than three. 	No Risk: No additional costs
7c	Planning Committee Meetings – Clerk Clerk unable to attend due to sickness, pre-arranged annual leave prior to the need for an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk – the 'calling a meeting' and 'submission of comments' processes to be published on the shared drive, for the ease of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-off: A councillor may take the minutes and submit the Committee's comments to TVBC. 	High: If covering for sickness, the cost of a Locum Clerk will be in addition to the Clerk's Salary

	extraordinary meeting being known, or resignation. Risk: Low	Planning Committee members in an emergency, or by a Locum Clerk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraordinary meeting: An extraordinary meeting may be called by the Chair at any time. Legislation as to process applies. Long-term: This work to be incorporated into the work of a Locum Clerk. 	
8	Council Finances – Paying contractors & invoices timely; staff salaries and HMRC payments, year-end accounts & AGAR, reviewing documents required for audit, budget management, processing grants, managing third party finances e.g. the Playing Field & Recreation Ground Charity and Mini-Bus Accounts.			
	<u>Activity Risk</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Action Agreed</u>	<u>Financial Risk</u>
8a	Clerk/RFO - Long-term Sick or resignation and unable to cover the required duties. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair to understand the payments process. The Chair to be recognised by the bank as an authority of the Council and have access to on-line banking. Clerk – to have available for the Chair any associated passwords, other than for the bank, for which the Chair must have their own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Clerk/RFO's absence, the Chair may process a payment(s) if considered necessary prior to the RFO's return. If required prior to the next Full Council meeting, the decision to do so must be agreed prior to payment by a minimum of two members of the Finance Working Group (which may include the Chair if a member of the Working Group) and ratified at the next meeting. Or by resolution if not required until after the next Full Council meeting. All the financial processes of the Council must be followed. Clerk – long-term sick: The Council to contract with a Locum RFO at the earliest opportunity. Clerk – resignation: To recruit asap, contracting with a Locum RFO for the interim period if required. 	High: If covering for sickness, the cost of a Locum Clerk/RFO will be in addition to the Clerk/RFO's Salary
8b	Loss of Council finance records through theft, fire, or corruption of files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard and electronic copies held of receipts, invoices and financial information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk/RFO to work with the Council's IT service provider and 	Medium: Some additional costs may be incurred over budget to

	Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial accounts held on Rialtas are backed up at least monthly. Rialtas and all financial records are automatically backed up to the One drive, and by an external IT service provider. The IT service provider can provide duplicates of all information held on the hard drive, and in partnership with Rialtas, the financial accounts. 	Rialtas to support the retrieval of the finance records.	cover the time of Rialtas and the IT Service Provider.
9	Full Council Meetings – Matters brought to the Council for consideration; recording and undertaking resolved actions			
	<u>Activity Risk:</u>	<u>Mitigation:</u>	<u>Action Agreed:</u>	<u>Financial Risk:</u>
9a	Full Council Meeting – Clerk – agendas, clerking the meeting, minutes and actions. Clerk unable to fulfil duties through e.g., through sickness, weather or resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of Locum Clerks is available on the HALC website. The Clerk to publish guidance on the shared drive, to support the Chair call an Extraordinary meeting lawfully – for an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideally, the Clerk, Chairman or Vice-Chairman, to seek the availability of a Locum Clerk. If able to clerk the meeting, but not attend, the Clerk may clerk the meeting via zoom if this facility is available. (Councillors must be in the room, the Clerk doesn't have to be). If the agenda is published, the summons issued and no Locum Clerk available, a volunteer or councillor to be asked to take the minutes. The Clerk to format and undertake actions on return to work. If the agenda is not published, the Chair to call an 'Extraordinary' meeting, following guidance on the shared drive. 	High: If covering for sickness, the cost of a Locum Clerk/RFO will be in addition to the Clerk/RFO's Salary. If covering the interim between appointments the hourly cost of a Locum Clerk/RFO will likely be higher than the budgeted salary + on-costs.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If long-term, the Council to contract with a Locum Clerk (RFO) asap. 	
9b	Meetings – Easily Transmittable Infection Loss of Councillors and/or the Clerk due to sickness that may impact on the work of the Council and/or spread to others with low immunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors to send apologies to the Clerk if known to be carrying easily transmittable infection. The Clerk, if able to work, but carrying an infection that could be to the detriment of others, to advise the Chair. Attendance or 'cover' to be in consideration of others likely present. Councillors with low immunity are encouraged to advise the Clerk and Chair to inform decisions. Information to held confidentially. Air circulation in the meeting room and masks to be worn by all when the risk of infection is high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the Clerk is aware that the meeting will be inquorate, the meeting is to be postponed. A councillor to be asked / volunteer to place a notice on the door. If it is agreed that the Clerk should not attend, actions as in (9a) above. 	Moderate: Financial implication if a Locum Clerk is required.
9c	Full Council Meeting – Councillors Loss of Councillors due to multiple resignations (causing Council to be inquorate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors to speak with the Chair and/or Vice-Chair of Council if have matters of concern. An 'Extraordinary' meeting to be called if deemed helpful, to prevent any escalation of concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk to inform remaining councillors and the Returning Officer The Returning Officer to advise on temporary working strategy for Council business to be maintained followed by the instigation of a by-election or co-option procedure. 	Low or High: Depending on whether a by-election is called.
9d	Lockdown or Period of Mourning Council unable to meet to make decisions due to a period of lockdown or mourning or similar. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Authority given to the Clerk to make decisions to support the smooth running of the Council, further to consultation via zoom with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Authority is only to be used as a last resort, with the recommendation of five members of the Council, including the Chair if available. 	No Risk: No additional costs

		council members, ideally ten, minimum five.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Authority, over and above areas covered within the 'Scheme of Delegation' is to be restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> items discussed with a minimum of five members (ideally ten), via zoom. items that may be delegated by law (e.g. this excludes items listed within regulations 1.13 & 1.14, or directives in consideration of the reason Council is unable to meet. 	
10	Day to day work of the Clerk & Proper Officer (and RFO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First point of contact for the public, councils and contractors etc. Day-to-day and emergency matters that affect the parish. Managing the Council's post, e-mails and telephone calls Communication via website, parish magazine, social media, and noticeboards. Duties as applicable to sections 1 to 9 above, plus any other duties undertaken by the Clerk as needed. 			
	<u>Activity Risk</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Action Agreed</u>	<u>Financial Risk</u>
10a	Day to Day Duties Clerk unable to fulfil duties through long-term sickness or resignation. Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures and passwords available to the Chair Everyday files logged and easily accessed for transfer to the Chair, with key equipment, depending on the period of cover anticipated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk, Chair or Vice-Chair to seek the availability of a Locum Clerk (and RFO). The Clerk to table the appointment of a Locum Clerk & RFO onto the agenda, or the Chair to call an Extraordinary meeting to include this appointment. The Locum Clerk to act as the Proper Officer during the Clerk's absence from work, or for an agreed period following a resignation. The Locum Clerk and RFO may be one or two roles in consideration of availability. 	High: If covering for sickness, the cost of a Locum Clerk/RFO will be in addition to the Clerk/RFO's Salary. If covering between appointments, the cost of a Locum Clerk will likely be higher than salary + on-costs.

10b	Loss of Equipment or Data Loss of Council equipment or electronic data due to theft, fault, corruption, or breakdown Risk: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information security policy in place to ensure no council data is stored on personal devices. Appropriate insurance in place to cover loss of equipment. Data backed up on One-Drive and on an external hard-drive by the Council's IT Support. Website backed up and accessible via external website support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk to inform Chair or Vice-chair. If applicable, report to Police and/or Insurers. If a personal data breach has occurred, ICO to be informed and GDPR guidance on data breaches followed. Clerk to inform third parties using these facilities. Seek support from the Council's Website and IT Support. 	Moderate: In consideration of the issue, potential costs over budgeted costs from IT and Website support, and a possible increase to insurance policy.
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Financial Risk: The most significant financial risk is the loss of the Clerk through long-term sickness. As per the recommendation of the Internal Auditor and the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) in their Practitioner Guide, March 2022, Council reserves to be kept at approximately 50% revenue expenditure to allow for this and other medium and high financial risks identified.

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