



## Managing risks in your local church

### INTRODUCTION

1. PCCs which are also registered charities are required to include in their Annual Report a statement 'confirming that the major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.'
2. For smaller PCCs (those whose annual income is below £100,000 and which therefore have not had to register with the Charity Commission), it is simply good practice to consider regularly what risks your church faces and how you manage those risks. Like buying insurance, it is often - thankfully - never needed, but it is sensible to have it in place, just in case...
3. Risk management should not be yet another bit of bureaucracy you feel is forced upon you; it is really no different from good management. It doesn't mean not doing anything for fear of falling foul of some bit of red tape. It simply means doing what you do, wisely.
4. Your risk management measures should be proportionate; some risks we just have to live with and sometimes risk-taking is part of Christian life. Risk management does not mean always taking the easy path! However, good stewardship of the people and property entrusted to us is also part of Christian life. Your risk management process should help to reassure your PCC, your congregation, your community and other donors that you are good stewards who manage resources well - and this in turn should set you free to pursue your mission with confidence.

### HOW TO GO ABOUT RISK MANAGEMENT

5. The Baptist Church has produced a helpful and comprehensive guide which you can download from [www.parishresources.org.uk](http://www.parishresources.org.uk). There is also guidance on the Charity Commission website here: <http://tinyurl.com/cydeg9v> and here: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Publications/cc26.aspx>.
6. Overleaf is a simple 5-step overview summarising the process. The Baptists' document includes a model risk management table which you could use as a template for your own. A simpler version which colour codes risks red, amber and green is given at the end of this Guide, and your diocese may have produced a version for you to use too. Finally, you may find this guidance on minimising risks helpful: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/treasurers/risks1.htm>.

## 5-step Overview to Risk Management for PCCs

**Step 1:** Begin by thinking about all the things that could go wrong and how these would hinder the church's work. Think broadly; for example:

- Part of the tower falling down could cause significant injury as well as expense and it could prevent services being held;
- If the treasurer were siphoning off funds from the church account, the financial loss and the bad publicity would damage the church;
- If the youth worker employed by the PCC was sacked, s/he might sue the PCC for unfair dismissal if the proper processes were not followed;
- An incident of child abuse would clearly be devastating;
- A lurid article in the local paper about the vicar could damage the church's reputation and credibility;
- A recession could see the church lose income on its investments and from donors who can no longer afford to give so much;
- Appointing PCC members who do not have the right skills to lead the church would damage the church's effectiveness; so too could becoming out of touch with the local community such that perhaps the young people find a warmer welcome in another denomination's church or the elderly feel excluded.

**Step 2:** You might like to divide the risks you have identified into categories such as these:

- **Governance risks** - the skills, competence & organisation of the PCC etc
- **Operational risks** - health & safety, employment, child protection etc
- **Financial risks** - reserves, cashflow, investments, income stability, fraud etc
- **External risks** - demographic & employment changes, public reputation etc
- **Regulatory risks** - fundraising, disability discrimination, HMRC requirements etc

**Step 3:** Next go through each risk and gauge i) how likely it is to happen (likelihood) and ii) how bad it would be if it did happen (impact).

One systematic way of doing this is to give both likelihood and impact a score out of 5, with 1 being 'unlikely' or 'little impact' and 5 being 'probable' or 'major impact.' You then multiply one score by the other, and the higher the score, the more action you need to take to reduce the risk. This is the method in the Baptists' document. Another way is to colour code your risks in red, amber and green to highlight the most severe. This is the method used in the table at the end of this guide. NB Grading fraud red does not mean you are accusing the treasurer of dishonesty! It is nothing to do with the individuals involved, it is about the risks inherent in the job. In fact, mitigation measures protect individuals from accusations.

**Step 4:** Once you have graded your risks, you need to decide what to do about them - what 'risk-mitigation measures' you will put in place. These measures should either make the risk less likely to happen (e.g. making sure that everyone working with children has been CRB-checked, or that cash is counted in the presence of two people), or make it less catastrophic if it did happen (e.g. buying insurance to cover the costs if the church hall is burnt down).

**Step 5:** Finally, make sure that all relevant people in the church understand and follow the risk management procedures, and remember to review the procedures annually.



Type of Risk	Risk	Potential Repercussions	Impact	Likelihood	Inherent Risk Status	Mitigation Measures	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Status
Operational	Failure to generate sufficient income to meet costs of church's work including paying parish share and keeping up with maintenance work to the building	Failure to meet objectives. Loss of reputation. Danger of carrying out activities in an unsafe building if repairs not carried out.	Major	Possible	High	Stewardship campaign run annually and all church members encouraged to give by standing order, with Gift Aid where possible. We have an active fundraising committee running events like our summer fayre which generates income for repairs. Also we can scale down some of our work if we need to, although we do not want to create a vicious circle. Our attendance is falling so even though people are generous, this remains a risk.	Significant	Possible	Medium
	Employment issues	Delay of work, bad publicity, costs of legal advice diverting us from our core objectives	Significant	Remote	Low	The PCC only employs a part-time secretary; our youthworker and organist are volunteers. We use a contract based on the diocese's model contract for the secretary.	Slight	Remote	Low
	Child / vulnerable adult welfare issues	Any abuse would have a terrible impact on our community and could lead to prosecution and very bad publicity, but most importantly damage to the victim.	Major	Possible	High	All adults who work with children or vulnerable adults are CRB-checked, and we have a policy of making sure there are always at least 2 CRB-checked adults whenever children are present.	Major	Remote	Medium
	Health and safety issues with premises or equipment (including church hall)	Possible injury for health and safety issues; delay to work for failure of equipment	Significant	Possible	Medium	Our churchwardens and clerk of works do regular checks on our equipment and buildings, keeping records which are presented annually to the APCM and Archdeacon for his visitation. This means that problems are usually picked up in time. We keep the tower door and kitchen door locked when not in use. We also have insurance including public liability to reduce the impact	Significant	Remote	Low

Type of Risk	Risk	Potential Repercussions	Impact	Likelihood	Inherent Risk Status	Mitigation Measures	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Status
Financial	Budgetary control & financial reporting	Poor management could lead to non-optimal allocation of funding, financial losses, debt, failure to meet objectives and loss of reputation.	Significant	Remote	Medium	Our treasurer is a qualified accountant and we consider the budget and financial position at every PCC meeting. The problem is more insufficient funds, not how we manage them. However, our major repair project will need careful management to ensure we don't go over-budget. We will be using builders recommended by St Legers in the next deanery; these builders have a reputation for finishing on time and in budget.	Slight	Remote	Low
	Cash flow problems, reserves, investment policy and ethical investment	Poor cash flow could mean we could not make payments to suppliers, staff or the diocese on time. Our investments could underperform or we could suffer loss of reputation if we have invested in unethical activities.	Slight	Remote	Low	Our income is fairly stable across the year and we have a reserves policy. Our investments are all with CCLA which has an ethical investment policy in accordance with Church advice.	Slight	Remote	Low
	Fraud or misappropriation or error by staff, PCC members or volunteers	Loss of funds. Failure to meet objectives. Loss of reputation	Major	Possible	High	Financial Controls are in place. Expenditure requires 2 signatures. Regular financial reports are available and annual accounts audited as required.	Major	Remote	Medium
Public	Changes to government / other policies or regulations	Reduced income eg if Gift Aid regime changes, or increased expenditure e.g. if VAT relief on repairs to listed buildings is abolished.	Significant	Possible	Medium	There is nothing we can do about e.g. the change to transitional relief on gift aid, except make sure we keep up with changes and try to maximise income in other ways.	Significant	Possible	Medium
	Date considered by the PCC:								
	Date approved / amended:								
	Date of next review:								