

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

- ✉ **Postal Address:** Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
- ☎ **Telephone:** (01727) 825 314
- 💻 **Website:** <https://colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk>
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2025-26 Item 47b

Business Continuity Plan

1. Introduction

This Business Continuity Plan (BCP) has been developed to ensure that essential services continue to be delivered in the event of a disruption. In line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and drawing on best practices from local council plans, this document outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and communication strategies to mitigate risks and manage recovery. This plan applies to all core services provided by the Council and is intended to safeguard assets, protect staff, and ensure the continuity of council operations.

2. Scope and Core Business Services

The plan covers the following key areas:

- **Core Services:**
 - Communication (website, notice boards, newsletters, social media)
 - Community amenities (recreation grounds and open spaces)
 - Public facilities (bus shelters and play areas)
 - Maintenance and infrastructure (footpaths, signage, waste bins, etc.)
 - Administrative functions (council meetings, record keeping, financial management)
- **Potential Causes of Disruption:**
 - Extreme weather (storm, flood, snow, adverse weather conditions)
 - Fire, environmental disasters, or terrorism
 - Equipment or utility failures
 - Loss or sudden absence of key personnel (Clerk, administrative, or operational staff)
 - Data loss (physical documents or electronic data)
 - Damage to buildings or essential infrastructure

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Clerk:** Acts as the first point of contact in an emergency and is responsible for initiating BCP actions.
- **Chair/Vice-Chair:** Provides leadership
- **Assistant or Temporary Cover:** Step in if key personnel are unavailable; responsibilities include communication with council members and managing access to secure documents, systems, and contact information.
- **Other Staff:** Ensure familiarity with their roles, maintain a rolling programme of key tasks, and update procedures as necessary.
- **Contact lists,** key access information (e.g., logins, safe codes, insurance details in spreadsheet), and emergency communication protocols are maintained and updated annually.

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4. Response and Recovery Strategy

The following combined table integrates elements, outlining the event types, immediate mitigation, short-term response, and longer-term recovery actions. Timelines (e.g. within 24 hours, 7 days, 1 month, and 3 months) are indicative and should be adapted to your organisation's needs.

Event	Mitigation / Minimise Impact	Immediate Response (Within 24 Hours)	Short-Term Continuity (Within 7 Days – 1 Month)	Longer-Term Recovery (Within 3 Months and Beyond)
Loss of Key Personnel (Clerk/Staff/Councillors)	Maintain secure backup of logins, passwords, and key contact details; ensure rolling programmes and training	- Inform Chair/Vice-Chair and staffing team - Activate contingency procedures	- Implement temporary cover strategies (e.g. assistant Clerk or locum) - Communicate with affected parties and stakeholders	- Recruit permanent replacements as required - Review and update succession and training policies
Loss of Council Documents (Physical/Fire/Flood)	Secure cloud storage and regular backups; maintain hard copy archives in safe locations	- Notify Chair and relevant emergency contacts - Report incident to insurance and, if needed, police	- Assess extent of damage/loss and initiate recovery measures - Inform full Council for strategic decisions	- Update document management and storage procedures - Implement additional risk assessments and controls
Loss of Electronic Data	Regular data backups to secure cloud and fireproof drives	- Activate backup systems - Inform IT support and Chair	- Restore data from backups and verify integrity - Communicate restoration status to Council members	- Conduct a full review of IT security protocols - Update and test recovery procedures periodically

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Event	Mitigation / Minimise Impact	Immediate Response (Within 24 Hours)	Short-Term Continuity (Within 7 Days – 1 Month)	Longer-Term Recovery (Within 3 Months and Beyond)
Loss/Breakdown of Equipment (Including Communications & Utility Failures)	Maintain adequate insurance cover; regular maintenance and surge protection; ensure availability of alternative equipment (e.g. mobile phones, laptops)	- Inform Chair and technical support - Report incident to insurance and, if applicable, the police	- Arrange for temporary replacement or rental of equipment - Enable remote working capabilities if building access is compromised	- Procure replacement equipment as per current financial regulations - Review equipment management and maintenance policies
Building or Infrastructure Damage	Ensure regular risk assessments and maintenance; maintain insurance and contingency contracts	- Evacuate premises if necessary - Notify emergency services and update the website/social media	- Move administrative functions to alternative premises or implement remote work policies - Inform affected parties (e.g. service users, hirers)	- Conduct a full assessment of damage and arrange for repairs or alternate long-term premises - Review building safety and insurance coverage
Adverse Weather / Local Disasters	Implement an Adverse Weather Policy and Community Emergency Plan (CEP); ensure insurance is up to date	- Activate emergency communication channels - Update website and social media regarding office closures or service disruptions	- Implement temporary closures and arrange for alternate working arrangements - Coordinate with local emergency services	- Review and adjust CEP based on incident learnings - Plan and budget for infrastructure improvements if necessary

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5. Communication Plan

- **Internal Communication:**
 - Use established channels (e.g. email) to update staff and Council members.
 - Regularly update the contact list and designate alternative contacts when key personnel are unavailable.
- **External Communication:**
 - Notify residents, service users, and partner agencies through the Council website, social media, and local media as appropriate.
 - Provide regular updates on the status of services and recovery actions.

6. Review and Maintenance

- The BCP will be reviewed annually by the Clerk and Full Council to ensure:
 - Contact details and responsibilities are current.
 - Procedures remain effective and relevant.
 - Lessons learned from any incident or testing are incorporated.
- Updates are distributed to all Council members and key stakeholders immediately after review.

Adopted by Colney Heath Parish Council –TBC

Next Review Date: March 2026

Lisa Peters
Parish Clerk/RFO
01/09/2025