



RINGSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & REGISTER

About the Council

Ringstead Parish Council is a small parish council as defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Council has varying activities and functions including:

- managing the playing field and play area
- commenting on planning applications
- maintaining the war memorial
- maintaining the village notice board
- general maintenance around the village

The Clerk retains the insurance file and will deal with all matters relating to risk and insurance, this is detailed in the Clerk's Job Description. The Council supports the Clerk in this role by providing training opportunities. The Council agrees the Risk Management Policy and Register, which is reviewed at least annually.

What is risk management?

Risk management can be defined as *'developing a practical plan to identify, deal with and minimise the adverse effects of the unexpected on an organisations ability to achieve its objectives, if or when it happens'*.

Benefits of sound risk management

Sound risk management can help the Council achieve its objectives by:

- a) Reducing the likelihood of events that would have a negative impact on the Council.
- b) Increasing the likelihood of events that would have a positive impact on the Council.
- c) Identifying opportunities where taking appropriate risks might benefit the organisation.

- d) Improving accountability, decision making, transparency and visibility.
- e) Identifying, understanding and managing multiple and cross-functional risks.
- f) Improving project management.
- g) Providing better understanding of, and compliance with, relevant governance, legal, regulatory and ethical requirements.
- h) Protecting our income and enhancing value for money.
- i) Protecting our reputation and stakeholder confidence.
- j) Controlling expenditure and delivering effective and efficient systems and controls.

Main Actions in relation to risk management

- ✓ The Asset Register is updated during the course of the year by the Clerk.
- ✓ Risk assessments (Health and Safety) are written and updated by the Clerk where appropriate, or another designated body. Copies of risk assessments are retained.
- ✓ This form is run on a traffic light system with risks identified as high (red), medium (orange) and low (green).
- ✓ Sites are inspected at least monthly, and records are retained.
- ✓ Play Areas are inspected monthly and an annual inspection is carried out by an external qualified inspector. All inspections must be retained for at least 22 years.
- ✓ The Council reviews the Insurance Policy prior to renewal.
- ✓ Financial Risk Assessments are carried out by the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer, as required.
- ✓ Documentation is kept safely and securely.
- ✓ The Council reviews its systems of Internal Control at least annually.

Parish Council Risk Assessment

“The greatest risk facing a local authority is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected of the Council.”

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the employer to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the employer should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible. Making sure that all employees are made aware of the results of the risk assessment.

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what the risk may be.
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review, assess and revise if required.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT				
Topic	Risk	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council regularly receives budget update information and the precept is an agenda item at a Council meeting. At the Precept meeting Council receives a budget update report, including actual position and projected position to end the year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate
	Requirements not submitted to Borough Council	L	With this information the Council maps out the required monies for operational costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from the Borough Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing to the Borough Council.	
	Amount not received by Borough Council	L	The Clerk receives confirmation of receipt of the Precept form from the Council. Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (approx. April time).	
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually and bank signatory list when necessary, especially after an AGM and an election. Monitor the bank statements monthly.
	Bank mistakes	L	The bank can make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts at least once a quarter, these are dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction.	

Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Cash received is banked within 3 banking days. There is no petty cash or float.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.
Reporting and Auditing	Information communication	L	A monitoring statement is produced regularly before each Council meeting with the agenda, discussed and approved at the meeting. This statement includes, bank reconciliation, budget update, and a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank.	Existing communication procedures adequate.
	Compliance	M	Council should regularly audit internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee.	Council annually to appoint a Councillor Auditor for Fidelity Compliance.
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods not supplied but billed	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. At each Council meeting the list of invoices awaiting approval is distributed to Councillors and considered. Two Councillors are nominated to check each invoice against the cheque book and associated paperwork. Council approves the list of requests for payment. The Council has minimal stocks, these are checked and monitored by the Clerk. Unpaid invoices to the Council for adverts in the newsletter or services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
	Incorrect invoicing	L		
	Cheque payable incorrect	L		
	Loss of stock	L		
	Unpaid invoices	L		
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate. Appropriate segregation of duties. Clerk advises on S137 payments.

Grants - receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	Clerk administers grants and keeps a record of expenditure and income in the cashbook.	Internal procedures in place to manage grants.
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly	L	Normal Parish Council practice as required by Financial Regulations would be to seek, if possible, more than one quotation for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods. For major contract services, formal competitive quotations/tenders would be sought.	Existing procedures adequate. Include when reviewing Financial Regulations.
	Overspend on services	M	If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly	L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees. Salary payslips and P32 forms are produced monthly by the Clerk a schedule of payments to the Inland Revenue (for Tax and NI). These are inspected at the Council meetings and signed off. The Tax and NI is worked out by a third-party provider as the service is outsourced. All Tax and NI payments are submitted in the Inland Revenue Annual Return by the deadline required. The Clerk has a contract of employment based on the nationally agreed contract for local government officers, together with a job description.	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.
	Wrong hours paid	L		
	Wrong rate paid	L		
	False employee	L		
	Wrong deductions of NI or Tax	L		
Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue	L			
Employees	Loss of key personnel	L	Chairman has a list of key passwords that is kept sealed in envelope to enable business continuity.	Existing procedure adequate. Membership of the Norfolk PTS and regular training and networking opportunities are encouraged.. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly.
	Fraud by staff	L	The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud.	
	Actions undertaken by staff	L	The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.	
	Staff Welfare	L	The Clerk is paid overtime for additional work undertaken above the normal requirements.	

	Death/Serious Illness of Clerk	M	Difficult to mitigate risk if it occurs.	Passwords are retained by Chairman in a sealed envelope
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L	No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors	No procedure required
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	M	Risk is higher in an election year. When an election is due the Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from the Borough Council for a full election and an uncontested election. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise The risk of having a contested election as this is a democratic process and should not be stifled.	Existing procedure adequate
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements	Existing procedure adequate at least annual submission.
Annual Governance and Accountability Return	Submit within time limits	L	Employer's Annual Return is completed and submitted online and to the Inland Revenue within the prescribed time frame by the Clerk. Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit.	Existing procedures adequate
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings, including a reference to the power used.	Powers have been minuted
Minutes/Agendas/Notices Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required).
	Business conduct	L	Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Members interests	Conflict of interest	L	Declaration of interests and dispensations is on every agenda for meeting ensuring Councillors are reminded of their duty to declare any interests.	Existing procedure adequate.

	Register of Members interests	M	Register of Members Interest forms completed after election or co-option.	Members take responsibility to update their Register.
Councillors	Councillors lack the relevant skills and knowledge or fail to understand their governance role for the Council.	L	Induction and training provided for new Councillors	Training provided after each election
Bullying/Harassment	Within Council or by third parties	L	Code of Conduct in place and signed by all Councillors. Regular 1:1's between Chair and Clerk. Standing Orders allows meetings to be postponed in event of disorderly conduct.	Existing procedures adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy	L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. Ensure compliance measures are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance provision annually. Review of compliance.
	Cost	L		
	Compliance	L		
	Fidelity Guarantee	M	Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	
Freedom of Information Act & Data protection	Policy	L	The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the F of I Act.
	Provision	M	There have been no requests for information to date but the Clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work. The Council is able to request a fee if the work will take more than 15 hours but the applicant also has the right to re submit the request broken down into sections, thus negating the payment of a fee.	

Council records – paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L	The current Parish Council records are stored at the Clerk's home.	Damage (apart from fire) Theft is unlikely and so provision adequate. Deeds/leases copied and deposited off-site in locked cabinet at Village Hall.
		M	Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, leases for land or property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc.	
Council records - electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage corruption of computer	M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the parish council's computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at monthly intervals.	External Hard Drive back-up of electronic files produced.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Assets	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(is)/property	L L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision, storage and maintenance provisions.	Existing procedure adequate.
Playing Field & Play Equipment	Physical risk to public on premises through accident/incident or infrastructure failure.	M	Monthly inspections are undertaken and written records are retained. Grounds maintenance services provided during growing season. Public Liability Insurance £10M is in place.	Ensure inspections carried out. Written records to be retained by Clerk.
		L	Independent annual inspection of play equipment by competent and qualified independent organisation.	Actions arising from inspection are actioned and reported to the Council.
Amenity land within Village	Physical risk to public on premises through accident/incident or infrastructure failure	M	All assets owned by the Parish Council are inspected at least annually. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections carried out. Written records to be retained by Clerk.

			Grounds maintenance services provided during growing season. Public Liability Insurance £10M is in place.	
Notice board	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L L	Parish Council has one notice board sited around the parish. All locations have approval by relevant parties, inspected regularly by the Councillors - any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Keys held by the Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate.
Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is responsible for a village sign, seats, around the village and other items such as litter and dog waste bins (all identified in the Asset Register). All items are covered by insurance. Monthly inspections are carried out and all reports of damage or faults are reported to Council and/or dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.
Meeting location	Adequacy Health & Safety	L L	The Parish Council Meetings are held at Ringstead Village Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health and Safety and comfort aspects.	Existing locations adequate.

Approved at Council Meeting: February 13 2023

Minute: 7.m.

To be reviewed annually next formal review January 2024