

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY- TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS PARISH COUNCIL

Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the ability of an organisation to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

Audit Commission – Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government (2001:5)

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. The Council is aware that although some risks can never be eliminated fully, it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focuses approach to managing risk, which:

- Identifies the subject
- Identifies what the risk may be
- Identifies the level of risk
- Evaluates the management and control of the risk and records findings
- Reviews, assesses and revises procedures if required.

Agreed by Tolleshunt Knights Parish Council on 15.1.2024

Min Ref: 3603/23

Review date: January 2025

RISK MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of risk	Review, assess, revise
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	M	All files and recent records are kept at the clerk’s home. The clerk makes a monthly back up of files. In the event of the clerk being indisposed arrangements will be made for suitable temporary cover, taking advice from EALC if required. External hard drive kept up to date.	Ensure fire proof storage. Ensure monthly back up and clarify arrangements for stand-in clerk to access records. Investigate alternatives to external hard drive.
Meeting location	Meeting location adequacy Health and Safety	L	Meetings are held in the Village Hall. A key is held by a Councillor and other keys are available if required from key holder members of the VHMC who manage the property. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and any public who attend from a health and safety and comfort aspect.	No action necessary.
Council records	Council Records loss through theft, fire, damage.	L	Current papers held in a locked metal cabinet at the clerk’s home. Archived papers are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the clerk’s home and have in the past sent to the Essex Records Office. Other archived files are kept in locked cabinets in the Village Hall.	The cabinet is fireproof. Arrangements are in place to allow access to keys/papers in the event of clerk being indisposed.
Electronic records	Loss through damage, fire, corruption of computer	L	The Parish Council’s electronic records are stored on the clerk’s computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at monthly intervals on an external hard drive, which is kept in a secure cabinet separate to paper copies.	Check files are backed up monthly and are password protected on an external drive. Password will be available to the Chair if necessary (see above).

Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	<p>Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept. The Parish Council receives monthly financial update information and detailed budgets are produced in the late autumn. The precept is an agenda item at the January meeting. To determine the precept amount required, the Council receives budget update information at each meeting. At the precept meeting Council receives a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing 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 MDC. The figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing. The Clerk informs the Council when the monies are received.</p>	<p>Ensure this is on monthly calendar of "Things to do". Monthly calendar to be updated and issued to all councillors. Monthly calendar should trigger appropriate agenda items</p>
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L	<p>An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers Liability, Public Liability and Fidelity Guarantee are a statutory requirement.</p>	<p>Ensure this is on monthly calendar of "Things to do" and that we do it and minute reference given.</p>
Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes	L	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Financial Regulations are updated as advised by the EALC.</p>	<p>Bank reconciliations are done monthly and included on the monthly financial update for parish councillors.</p>
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	<p>The Council has no petty cash or float. Cash transactions are agenda items and agreed by PC; these are fully receipted and then reimbursed monthly by cheque on receipt of an invoice. Two signatories necessary.</p>	<p>No action</p>
Financial controls and records	Inadequate records and checks	L	<p>Monthly statement prepared by RFO. Check by designated P. Councillor with RFO. Two signatories on cheques. Payments agreed at full PC meeting. Internal and external audit. Financial obligations resolved and clearly minuted before any commitment. All payments resolved by the full Council and clearly minuted.</p>	<p>Ensure checks are undertaken and minuted at PC meetings.</p>
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision- cost of responding to requests	L	<p>Standing Orders give details of how requests will be dealt with according to the policy. Contingency fund must take account of possible costs- difficult to mitigate due to unpredictable nature of risk.</p>	<p>Check website information is clear.</p>

Clerk	Loss of clerk Fraud Actions undertaken	L	A training budget is allocated each year in the precept to enable training for the Clerk. Clerk is provided with relevant training and access to assistance and legal advice. Membership of EALC maintained. The full Council monitors working conditions and performance management. See also financial checks.	No action Ensure pay rises are actioned in line with local government changes and minuted.
Election Costs	Risk of election cost	L	Risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures, which can be adopted to minimize risk of having a contested election. Any funds required would have to come from the contingency fund. In an election year include in financial budget when setting precept.	PC to respond to parish needs.
Additional costs-extra meetings	Risk of need for additional meetings for planning to comply with LPA consultation requirements	L	Contingency fund needs to take this into account.	Monitor frequency; at present very low but if increases this needs to be included in precept planning.
Income Tax	Errors on annual return a risk to PC	L	Internal auditor checks.	No action.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements. VAT reclaims are undertaken annually.	Ensure reclaim undertaken.
Annual return	Not submitted within time limits	L	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 (if this is required under accounting regulations).	Ensure on monthly calendar of "Things to do"
Assets	Playing fields Street furniture and playground equipment. Notice board Damage to play equipment and benches etc.	L	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks are made on all equipment by members of the Parish Council. Annual play area inspection undertaken. Work undertaken in response to this. Requests for use of the playing field for local events are discussed and agreed at PC meetings and minuted.	Ensure on monthly calendar of "Things to do"
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments. Working Parties taking decisions	L	All activities and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council and to be resolved and clearly minuted. Working parties (if required) exist within the Parish Council and are given clear terms of reference. Any decisions are made by the full Council.	No action necessary.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality Non compliance with statutory requirements	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements as advised by EALC.	Clerk to ensure statutory documents packs are immediately available to new councillors.

			Minutes are approved and signed at next meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council Meetings is managed by the Chairman. Members adhere to Code of Conduct	New Statutory Documents or changes to be notified by clerk so Council documents can be updated.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L	Insurance is in place. Risk assessment of any individual event undertaken	No action
Employer Liability	Non compliance with employment law	L	Use EALC / District Council where necessary. Clerks Pay and conditions determined by National Guidance.	Monitored by full Council; updated if national changes to pay and conditions arise.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities Proper and timely reporting via Minutes	L	Clerk clarifies legal position on proposals and seeks advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves minutes at monthly meetings.	No action
Members' Interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members Interests	L	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of each meeting. Included as agenda item Register of Members Interests form to be reviewed at least on an annual basis at the Annual Meeting held in May. Members to take responsibility to update their register when relevant.	Annual monitoring and new councillors register updated as necessary.
Best Value	Charges to the Parish Council are too high.	L	The Responsible Financial Officer will obtain three quotes for any work undertaken by Contractors on behalf of the Parish Council, where the cost of work equals or exceeds the figure given in the Council's Financial Regulations.	No action
Salaries.	Salary paid incorrectly	L	The only paid employee is the Clerk. The Clerk presents a monthly account and itemises the wages and expenses together with receipts where appropriate. The Parish Council must approve this before payment is made. Internal auditor ensures that deductions are properly administered.	No action
Data Protection	Non-compliance with data protection legislation. GDPR implementation	L	The Parish Council is making progress towards meeting the requirements for GDPR, using Maldon District Council to act as the Data Protection Officer for the Parish Council. Maldon District Council's policy templates will be used.	Agenda item for each meeting to update
A meeting or part of a meeting becomes inquorate	The Council cannot transact its business in a valid and legal manner	L	A quorum is one third of the Council or a minimum of three members. If an item on the agenda becomes inquorate, either through absence or declarations of interest, the Chair shall adjourn that item to a future meeting.	Keep under review.

			<p>If the meeting itself becomes inquorate the Chair will close the meeting, and adjourn all business to a future meeting.</p> <p>In the event that the entire Council becomes inquorate due to a lack of members either through resignation, election or other reason, the clerk will seek the advice of the District Council.</p>	
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