

Ashford Parish Council Risk Assessment

Adopted on 21 January 2016 , Reviewed 14 December 2023

Notes

“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.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	All files and recent records are kept at the Clerk’s home. The Clerk makes regular back-ups of files to an external hard drive. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chairman to contact the Devon Association of Local Councils for advice.	Existing procedures adequate. Review when necessary.

Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its statutory duties. Requirements not submitted to NDC Amount not received by NDC	L L L	The Council reviews the Precept requirement annually at the November / December meeting and reviews the presented budget update information, including actual position and projected position to year end and estimated figures for the next financial year. With this information the Council then agrees the amounts set for the specific budget headings for the following year, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from North Devon Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing to NDC. The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (end of April).	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The bank does make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts when the statements arrive, these are dealt with	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary and bank signatory list when necessary, especially



Ashford Parish Council

			immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. The Clerk reviews the Councils banking arrangements regularly.	after an AGM and an election. Monitor the bank statements.
<u>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT</u>				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. No cash is received. The Council's insurance policy has a Fidelity Guarantee.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary. Ensure Fidelity Insurance is adequate.
Reporting and auditing	Information communication Compliance	L M	A budget monitoring statement is produced regularly and circulated to members with an Agenda. A full list of payments and receipts and cheques to be signed is provided on the Agenda. Invoices are checked against the figures on the Agenda by the Chairman. Bank Statements are examined by the Chairman. Council should regularly audit internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee.	Existing communication procedures adequate. Council annually to appoint a Councillor to check financial records for Fidelity compliance
Direct costs	Goods not supplied but	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set	Existing procedure

Overhead expenses Debts	billed Incorrect invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Loss of stock	L L L	out the requirements. The Council has minimal stocks, these are checked and monitored by the Clerk.	adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval and minuted. Cheque numbers are shown on the Minutes.	Existing procedure adequate.
Grants - receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	The Parish Council receives grants from NDC, DCC and outside bodies any monies received is reported to the Council at a meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges - Rentals payable	Payments of leases/rentals	L	Negative. The Parish Council does not currently have any lease or rental agreements.	
Charges - Rentals receivable	Receipt of rental Insurance implication	L L	Negative. The Parish Council does not currently have any lease or rental agreements.	Existing procedure adequate.
Best value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L M	As per Financial Regulations normal Parish Council practice 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 tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.



			a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	
<u>FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT</u>				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Salaries and assoc. costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid False employee Wrong deductions of Tax Unpaid Tax contributions to the Inland Revenue	L L L L L L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of its part-time employee at Council meetings when necessary. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council. Salary is paid as per the contract of employment. The Tax contributions due are reported to the Council and signed at each meeting, following a PAYE return with relevant HMRC software. All Tax payments are made and signed at the meeting. The Clerk has a contract of employment and job description.	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.
Clerk/Other workers (voluntary/casual)	Loss of Clerk Fraud Actions undertaken Health & Safety	L L L L	A contingency fund should be established to enable training for the CiLCA qualification in the event of the Clerk resigning. The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee	Include in financial statement when setting precept. Existing procedure



Ashford Parish Council

			insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud. The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.	adequate. Purchase reference books where necessary. Membership of the SLCC. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L	No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate.
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	L/M	Risk is higher in an election year. When an election is due the Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from the District 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. Consideration should be given through the budgeting process for an election-by-election.	Existing procedure adequate.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate
Annual return	Submit within time limits	L	The Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent to the External Auditor within time limit.	Existing procedures adequate.



FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
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.	All activities and payments Minuted.
Council records - paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, ownership of property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Materials are in a metal filing cabinet (not fire proof).	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision adequate. Deeds/leases copied and deposited off-site.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage Corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerk;s computer at the Clerk's home. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals on to external hard drive.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L L L M	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. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance provision annually. Review of compliance.

Data protection	Policy Provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency.	Ensure annual renewal of registration.
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L M	The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place. The Council is able to request a fee for any information requested to cover the cost of consumables and the clerk's time.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the FOI Act.
Meeting location	Adequacy Health & Safety	L M	The Parish Council Meetings are held at Ashford Church Hall. Parish Council Members have a key to the Village Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspects.	Existing location adequate.

ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Street Furniture, Play Area Equipment and Open Spaces	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L L	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks made of all equipment by Members of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance requirements annually.
Noticeboards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L L	Parish Council has a notice boards sited in the Parish. The location has approval by relevant parties, insurance cover, is inspected regularly by Councillors - any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate.

LIABILITY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council (not ultra vires) and to be resolved and clearly minuted.	Existing procedure adequate.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Business conduct	L 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	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if



Ashford Parish Council

			Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	required). Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance is in place. Risk assessments regularly carried out to comply with requirements.	Existing procedures adequate. Ensure risk assessments are carried out.
Employer Liability	Non compliance with employment law	L	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from the Devon Association of Local Councils.	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities Proper and timely reporting via Minutes Proper document control	M L L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves Minutes at monthly meetings. Retention of document policy in place.	Existing procedures adequate.

COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members interests	M M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of the meeting or during the meeting if it is realised that a Councillor has an interest. Register of Members Interest forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate. Members to take responsibility to update their Register.

