

Woodham Walter Parish Council

Risk Management Policy

| | Reviewed | Adopted | Minute Reference |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
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| Reviewed | 09/07/22 | | |
| Reviewed | May 2023 | 15/05/2023 | 2942.3 (i) |
| Next Review | | | |

Woodham Walter Parish Council

Risk Management Policy

The Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk with the Chair shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy and assessment in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements, shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk with the Chair shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

Major Threat

The greatest risk facing the council is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected by village residents.

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the Council 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 main points have been followed and the register constructed accordingly.

- 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.

Points and areas identified are dealt with in the tables that follow and assessed and recorded accordingly:

Insurance

The Parish Council has in place an insurance policy to meet its demands and needs. This is reviewed on an annual basis.

All risks are covered on lamp posts, goal posts, computer equipment, phone kiosk, playground equipment and surfacing, fencing of play area, new benches and bins. There is insurance for financial losses, public liability, Officials indemnity, Employers Liability, Libel and Slander, Fidelity Guarantee and Legal expenses

Commented [JBW1]: Risk Assessments are completed for individual activities and events as well as this Risk Management Policy Woodham Walter Parish Council also has the following Risk Assessments (RA):
Bell Meadow RA including Playground and Goal Posts.
Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers RA
Financial RA
Footpath and Tree Officer RA
General Parish RA
Litter Pick RA
Planting & General Tidying at Bell Meadow RA
Telephone Kiosk RA
Village Hall RA - use for meetings
Women's Club RA - use for meetings
Winter Salt Bag Scheme RA
Woodham Walter Common RA
Work Station RA

And for unique events:
Bel Meadow Playground Opening Ceremony
Jubilee Celebration RA
Remembrance RA
Ride London and Wedding Parking RA
Street Party RA

Commented [JBW2]: The Parish Council has the power to indemnify councillors and staff with insurance cover.

Local Government Act 2000 s101
Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004, England.

The authority may insure its members against accident when on duty.
Local Government Act 1972, s140(1) as amended.

A Council insures its property and funds against loss, destruction or outside claims. In Woodham Walter this includes street lights, goal posts, computer equipment, phone kiosk, playground equipment and street furniture. We do not have any buildings but we do own a public open space.

Local Government Act 1972, s111

Financial & General Management

| Topic | Risk | 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 | Business Continuity Plan to be agreed and reviewed annually. There is a reserve in place and insurance as required. | |
| Precept Determination | Fit for purpose | L | Councillors receive quarterly statements of how the accounts are performing against budget. This provides simple analysis and tracking and when budgets are formed (December) the RFO works with the Chairman to determine the budget for the next year. The budget is discussed at the December Parish Council meeting. In January the precept calculations are received and the budget finalised and approved. | Process used has been established for some time and operates effectively |
| Precept Income | Income not received from MDC or reduced from January's projected amounts | L | Reserves value is determined at each budget setting meeting. Reserves are in place for any unexpected expenditure. | Procedure set to mitigate this risk |
| Financial Records | Financial irregularities | L | The Council has Financial Regulations, which set out requirements for banking, cheques, BACS and reconciliation of accounts. | Procedure to allow for internet banking has been set and will be reviewed annually. |
| | Bank errors or Bank Losses | L | The Clerk is not a bank signatory. Two Councillor signatures required per cheque. | |
| | Internet fraud | L | The payment schedule is approved at a Parish Council Meeting. The Clerk then draws up BACS payments and two | |

Commented [JBW3]: This column indicates if the risk is considered to be of High, Medium or Low Risk. A High Risk item will need to have control measures in place to reduce the risk.

Commented [JBW4]: The council has in place fidelity insurance to ensure that if money is lost it is covered by this insurance.
Local Government Act 1972, s114

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| | | | separate signatories signs into authorise those payments. RFO checks bank statements monthly against approved expenditure for internet banking purposes. A Councillor (not signatory) checks the bank statements and accounts sheets are correctly reconciled at each Parish Council meeting. The Chairman inspects the accounts on at least two occasions through the year. | |
| Cash | Loss through theft or dishonesty | L | Council requirements are set out in the Financial Regulations. Cash received is banked as soon as possible. No petty cash or float held. Fidelity Insurance maintained. | Existing procedures and insurance are adequate and finance regulations are reviewed annually. |
| Reporting and Auditing | Information Communicated | L | Financial management statement produced and examined by councillors monthly. Quarterly expenditure and budget review inspected by councillors. Chairman inspects accounts on at least 2 occasions through the year – usually end of September and end of March. | Existing communication procedures adequate. |
| | Auditing and Governance | M | Council undertakes internal and external independent audits. | Council appoints an independent Auditor annually |
| Cost Overheads | Services not supplied but invoiced | L | Council approves all invoices for payment and only approves when goods supplied or work completed | Procedures proven to be satisfactory over many years. Financial regulations check annually |
| Bad Debt | Incorrect invoicing | L | Invoices prepared for approval by Councillors every month. Chairman initials each invoice. | Procedures proven to be satisfactory over many years. Financial regulations check annually. |
| | Payee payable incorrect | L | One councillor checks each invoice against the cheque book or internet banking payment list and associated paperwork and One councillor initials | Electronic signatures to be accepted in exceptional circumstances – e.g. COVID / Virtual Meetings. |

Commented [JBW5]: Cash is banked by the RFO. In order to account for cash and property paid to the council, receipts are issued to payees. The Parish Council does not encourage payment by cash. This is usually only for occasions where a cash donation is given or for example this year we sold some spare Jubilee mugs and each mug cost £3.50 and were sold at the Street Party event so electronic transactions could not easily be made.
Local Government Act 1972, s115.

Commented [JBW6]: This insurance provides that if money or property is lost there is a fund from which it can be replaced.
Local Government Act 1972, s114

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| | | | related cheque stubs against cheque payments. | |
| | Loss of stock | L | Minimum stock held | |
| | Unpaid invoices | L | Unpaid Council invoices for adverts, bulletins or services are pursued and if practical payment obtained in advance. | |
| | Unpaid Invoices re: Party Tent Hire | L | Invoices need to be paid before collection of the Party Tents is allowed. | |
| Payment Approval | Payments authorised by full council only | L | All payment transactions made following the finance regulations process and are presented monthly at Council meeting for review in a due payments list | Procedures proven to be satisfactory over many years. Financial regulations check annually |
| Grants Received | Grants are applied for against specified projects | L | Grant applications are prepared by the RFO and approved one Councillor. The RFO checks progress and reports back when the application result is determined. Grants normally have conditions of use attached, these being checked and monitored by the Clerk. | The application process determines the procedure to be followed if at variance from the financial regulations. |
| Achieving Best Value | Multiple quotes for larger projects | L | The finance regulations dictate when multiple quotes are required. For significant spend projects contracts awarded through sealed bid tenders. Project specification produced for significant tenders as part of the tender process. | Existing procedures checked annually. |
| | Project overspend | M | Clerk/RFO (and/or Consultants) check the delivery against specification and reports shortfalls to the Council. | |
| Salaries and Expenses | Salaries incorrect, wrong hourly rate or hours worked | L | Salaries assessed annually by the relevant committee and recommendations made to Council. Figures incorporated in budget calculations. Hours worked checked and approved by Chair and reported to Council monthly. | Existing procedures checked annually. |

Commented [JBW7]: Financial Regulations and Standing Orders detail that payments are authorised by two councillor signatories.

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| | Fraud or incorrect claims | L | Expenses must be approved. Mileage claims paid on completion of claim form and receipts provided. Mileage claim rates match those recommended by NALC. | |
| | Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to Inland Revenue | | Use of payroll company Eslip(Top Source) submitted to IR monthly. | |
| Employees | Loss of key staff or long term illness, resignation or misconduct.Health and Safety training requirements. | M | Clerk considered only critical staff member. Temporary replacements for sickness sought using EALC. Vacancy roles filled using the recruitment process. References are taken and retained in respect of every employee. | The EALC advice and recommendation sought. Personnel sub committee formed to interview candidates. Recommended candidates approved by full Council |
| | Task specific training needed. | L | Training sources and budget available | |
| Election Costs | Risk of unexpected election | L | Council precepts for election costs each year. MDC monitoring office advice sought on potential election costs | Reserves used to meet election costs if necessary |
| VAT | Re-claiming/charging | L | Requirements set out in the financial regulations | Existing procedures checked annually |
| Annual Return | Completed and submitted in time limits | L | Annual Return is completed and submitted to the internal auditor for checking. Approved by Council and signed before sending to the External Auditor within time limit. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Legal Powers | Illegal activity or decision making | L | All activity and payments to be resolved and minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings, Clerk to ensure appropriate powers are available. | Decision made form part of the minutes |
| Agendas, Minutes & significant reports | Accuracy and legal | L | Minutes and agenda are produced by the Clerk to defined standards and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are | Standing Orders followed and adequate. Electronic signatures to be accepted in exceptional circumstances – e.g. COVID / Virtual Meetings |

Commented [JBW8]: Parish Council's can only do what legislation allows.

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| | | | displayed according to the legal requirements as a minimum. Council meetings managed by a Chairman. | |
| Members Interests | Conflict of Interests and register of Interests | L | Standing Orders require declaration of interests at each Parish Council meeting by members. Register of Members Interest in the public domain and should be reviewed regularly by Councillors. | Existing procedures are adequate. Members reminded to review their entry. Clerk will remind annually but Councillors are responsible for ensuring existing and new Councillors register their interests |
| Insurance | Meets needs and competitive | L | Reviewed annually prior to policy renewal. All associated liability covered. Policy updated as new assets added. Employee cover adequate and current. | |
| Data Protection | Data protection rules followed | L | Council registered for data protection and reviewed annually. GDPR regulations to be followed. Data Protection Officer appointed. | |
| Freedom of Information | Policy availability | L | FoI policy available in the public domain. Policy reviewed annually | |

Recreation & Play Areas

| Topic | Risk | H/M/L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
|------------------|---|-------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Assets | Loss or damage | L | Annual review of assets undertaken. | Adequate inspections undertaken |
| | Risk of damage or injury to third parties | | | |
| Asset Management | Premises or other assets being closed or unavailable for use by the Council or community due to poor or dangerous condition | L | An asset register produced and expenditure considered/budgeted for if required such that assets can be replaced at the end of their natural life | Asset management inventory and plan |
| Recreation Areas | Bell Meadow | L | Areas regularly inspected by Councillors and Clerk and electronic log book kept up to | Adequate inspections undertaken |

Commented [JBW9]: Public Liability Insurance of £10million. Assets regularly inspected including annual independent inspection of playground. Local Government Act 1972, s111

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| | Risk of Damage or injury to third parties. | | date. Community Engagement Team also inspect. | |
| | Goal Posts at Bell Meadow Risk of Damage or injury to third parties. | L | Goal posts regularly inspected by Councillors and Clerk and electronic log book kept up to date. Annual independent inspection. | Adequate inspections undertaken |
| | Playground Risk of Damage or injury to third parties. | M | Playground inspected regularly by Clerk and Councillors. Clerk attended a Playground Inspection Course run by EALC in Sept 2021. The Community Engagement Team are contracted to inspect the equipment on a weekly basis. A full inspection by an independent and suitably qualified professional will be undertaken on an annual basis. Insurance company notified of new playground and policy was amended accordingly in 2021. Compliance with Insurance instructions. | Adequate inspections undertaken. Action planned for any maintenance required. If an item was deemed to be unsafe it will be closed to the public. |
| Notice Boards | Risk of Damage or injury to third parties. Location suitability | L | Notice boards located outside The Old Chapel Stores (Tadpoles Nursery). Annual Inspection. | Adequate inspections undertaken |
| Street Furniture | Risk of Damage or injury to third parties. Location suitability | L | Street furniture inspected regularly by Councillors and staff. Maintenance needs recorded through the monthly meeting where necessary. Annual Inspection. | Adequate inspections undertaken |

Commented [JBW10]: Local Government Act 1972, s111 gives the power to carry out procedures which are calculated to facilitate the discharge of their functions. At Woodham Walter we have a new playground and it is deemed essential to provide insurance cover for the equipment provided.

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| Meeting Location | Adequate provision and | L | Parish meetings held in the Women's Club room. The Women's Club are responsible for the care and maintenance of the building. Risk Assessment prepared to establish emergency procedures. | Any concerns will be duly reported to the Women's Club. During COVID restrictions meetings may be held virtually (according to legislation). Government recommendations and regulations to be monitored. |
| | H&S checked | M | | |
| Council Records – paper | Loss through fire or theft | L | Electronic records held on computer Archive documents to be kept at Essex Records Office. | |
| | Computer failure | M | Documents are stored on OneDrive. Regular backups taken and stored on USB by Chairman. | |
| Trees | Trees or branches posing a safety problem to the public where unrestricted right of access is available | M | Annual inspection and register of trees. Councillor appointed as Tree Officer Purchase of expertise as required for problem areas. | Review regularly |

Miscellaneous

| Topic | Risk | H/M/L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
|--------------------------------|--|-------|--|----------------------|
| Poor reputation of the Council | The work of the Council is not understood leading to negative feedback from parishioners and dissatisfaction with the way services are carried out | L | Regular use of communication channels including web site, emails and newsletters to explain the Council's activities. Libel and Slander included in the council's insurance policy. | Review regularly |
| Poor stakeholder relationships | Perceived or real breakdown in communications between tiers of local government or between the PC and other public providers | L | PC to understand the services provided by others and to discuss areas of joint interest periodically. The PC to respond to consultations to put its point of view across adequately. | Review regularly |
| Lack of vision | An over-emphasis on the management and operation of Council services may lead to a | M | The PC to review its VDS stance on Planning proposals so that a vision of the future is always available. Plan | Review regularly |

Commented [JBW11]: Slander affecting official, professional or business reputation. Defamation Act 1952, s2

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| | poor performance with regard to forward planning which may prevent partnerships being formed with other public and private supplier or even the loss of grants. | | reviewed regularly and community engagement for feedback. PC consider forward planning at budget setting time and periodically through the year. | |
| Lack of Training or time to undertake the role of the PC | Inadequate knowledge or specialist ability may lead to poor decisions | L | Adequate training budget available. Encourage training for Councillors and staff | Maintain a training record and review annually. |