

Blackmore, Hook End and Wyatts Green Parish Council
Risk Assessment approved at Parish Council Meeting on 17th September 2015
Updated and approved on 21 Sept 17, 20 Dec 18, 21 Nov 19, 19 Nov 20
Updated and approved by Parish Council on 17th February 2022

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential inherent risks. The Parish Council, based on a recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

This document has been produced to enable Blackmore, Hook End and Wyatts Green Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. The risks are classified as High (H), Medium (M) or Low (L).

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) indentified	H/M/L	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
---------	---------------------	-------	----------------------------	----------------------

Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its duties	L	<p>In order to determine the amount of precept required, the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) regularly provides budget update information to the Council. A budget report, including actual position, projected position to the year end and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk/RFO is provided to the December/January Policy & Resources meeting. With this information the P&R members review the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and apply specific figures to budget headings thus determining the precept amount to be requested from Brentwood Borough Council. The recommendations of the Policy & Resources meeting are presented to the full Parish Council meeting (normally January) and the precept approved.</p> <p>The agreed precept submission is prepared by the RFO or Clerk, confirmed by the Chairman or a Councillor and submitted by the RFO or Clerk in writing who informs the Council when the monies are received.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial Records	<p>Inadequate records</p> <p>Financial irregularities</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.</p> <p>In line with the Financial Regulations, cheques are raised by the Clerk/RFO and signed by any three of Councillors. Online payments are set up by the RFO/Clerk and approved online by two Councillors. In line with the Internal Auditor's recommendation, documentation confirming the names of the approving Councillors is filed with the relevant invoice.</p>	Existing procedure adequate Review the Financial Regulations regularly to ensure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose

Bank and banking	Inadequate checks Banks' mistakes	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements Monthly reconciliation of bank statements to accounts is carried out by the RFO as part of the regular financial reporting process.	Existing procedure adequate Existing procedure adequate
Reporting and auditing	Information communication	L	Financial information is a regular agenda item (Finance Report) and discussed/reviewed and approved at each meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.
Grants	Receipt of grant	L	The Parish Council does not presently receive any regular grants. The Clerk, with the assistance of Councillors, prepares grant applications on behalf of the Council as and when needed. Loan applications from PWLB or similar organisations are prepared by the RFO/Clerk, reviewed and approved by full Council.	Procedure would be formed, if required
Charges - rents receivable	Payment of rents	L	The RFO invoices and collects rents covering the use of the Blackmore playing fields from Blackmore Village Hall; such rents are banked on receipt. Following the establishment of the Parish Allotment Garden in 2015, Allotment rents are due in April each year. Allotment holders have signed agreements and rent income is reviewed from time to time. An Allotments Register is in place detailing initial deposits and annual allotment rents received. The RFO informs tenants in February/March each year by letter of the amount of rent due and collects such rents, either by BACS or cheques/cash which are banked on receipt.	Existing procedure adequate

Grants and support payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	<p>All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, is minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using S137 powers of expenditure.</p> <p>Organisations within the Parish applying for grants from the Council are required to complete the Council's Grant Application Form and submit this to the Council with financial supporting documentation as specified. Such applications are reviewed by and approved at full Parish Council meetings.</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate.</p> <p>Existing procedure adequate.</p>
Value for money and accountability	<p>Work awarded incorrectly.</p> <p>Overspend on services.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Normal Parish Council practice is to seek, if possible, more than one quotation for any substantial work to be undertaken. For major work, competitive tenders are sought in line with the procedures detailed in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</p> <p>If problems are encountered with a contract the Clerk will investigate the situation and report to the Council.</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate.</p> <p>Include when reviewing Financial regulations.</p>
Salaries and wages, PAYE and NI and pension contributions	<p>Salary paid incorrectly.</p> <p>Unpaid Tax to HMRC</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Real Time Information is in place, meeting all HMRC requirements. Detailed pay-slips are prepared and year-end payments and deductions reconciled by the RFO. Annual returns to HMRC are submitted automatically under the Real Time Information system.</p> <p>Contracts of employment are in place.</p> <p>The RFO and Clerk submit the required monthly and annual pension returns to Essex County Council.</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate.</p>

Employees	<p>Fraud by staff</p> <p>Health and safety</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee insurance adhered to with regard to fraud.</p> <p>All employees to be provided adequate direction and safety equipment needed to undertake their roles. Such direction would be given by the Chairman of the Council and/or relevant Parish Councillors.</p> <p>To meet the requirements of her role, the Clerk divides her working week between the Parish Office and her home.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Monitor health and safety requirements and insurance annually.</p>
VAT	Reclaiming/charging	L	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. The RFO prepares and submits quarterly VAT claims to HMRC. Claims are routinely checked as part of the annual Internal Audit.</p>	Existing procedures adequate
Annual Return	Submit within time limits	L	<p>The Annual Return is completed and submitted to Council within the prescribed time frame by the RFO. The form is completed and signed by the Council/ RFO/Clerk as required, submitted to internal auditor for completion and signature then checked and sent to External Auditor within time frame.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	<p>All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved at full Council Meetings, including reference to the power used under the Finance section of agenda and Finance report monthly.</p>	Existing procedures adequate

Minutes/agendas/ Notices, Statutory Documents, Transparency Code	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Agenda/information is published and displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chair	Existing procedures adequate.
	Business conduct	L		Members adhere to Code of Conduct
Members' interests	Conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest are made by members at Council meetings. Register of members' interests' forms reviewed regularly.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Register of members interests	M		Members take responsibility to update register.
Insurance	Adequacy	L	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements. Public, Employers and Employee liabilities are a necessity and are included within policies. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Fidelity checks in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Insurance reviewed annually.
	Cost	L		
	Compliance	L		
	Fidelity Guarantee	M		
Data protection	Policy provision	L	The Parish Council is registered with the ICO for the provision of council services with the annual fee being paid by Direct Debit. The Clerk, RFO and some Councillors received training on the GDP Regulations as introduced in May 2018. The Council adopted a Privacy Notice which sets out the Council's policy on handling personal data. This meets the GDPR requirements ensuring the appropriate level of data security.	Ensure annual renewal of registration Existing procedure adequate.
	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	L		

Freedom of Information	Policy Provision	L M	The Council has a Model Publication scheme in place. The Parish Council is aware that if a substantial request was submitted it could create a number of additional hours work. The Parish Council can request a fee to supplement the extra hours.	Monitor any requests made under FOI
Liaison with Parishioners	Failure to provide information to parishioners	L	The public is admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and given the opportunity to make representations and ask questions on any subject included in the agenda. (Note: See special arrangements below for meetings during Covid pandemic). In addition, ad hoc complaints or questions from Parishioners are dealt with promptly and effectively by the Clerk, RFO or Councillors. The Council has a website which is maintained and updated by the Clerk and Councillors. Statutory information and documents are uploaded to this website along with communications to Parishioners as required.	Existing procedure is adequate.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS

Assets	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third party property	L L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision. An Asset Register is maintained and kept up-to-date with appropriate valuations for insurance purposes and Annual Return purposes.	Existing procedures adequate
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. Assets are insured and inspected on regular basis.	Existing procedures adequate

Safety inspections	Risk/injury to users	M	<p>All recreation areas are inspected regularly by designated Parish Councillors who have been trained in this work by ROSPA. Their reports are reviewed by the relevant Committee and Parish Council (as deemed appropriate) and appropriate remedial action taken where necessary. In addition, qualified officials undertake an annual inspection and supply their report to the Council, on which action is taken if required.</p> <p>In the event a complaint is received from a Parishioner/user regarding the safety of recreation equipment, a Councillor will promptly inspect and either approve repair work or take the said equipment out of action until a decision can be made (in line with Council policy) for repair or replacement of the said equipment.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
Notice Board	Risk of damage	L	<p>The Parish Council currently has five notice boards. No formal inspection procedures are in place but they are inspected and updated by the Parish Clerk at regular intervals. Any reports of damage and faults are reported to the Parish Council and dealt with in accordance to the correct procedures of the Council.</p>	Existing procedures adequate
Meeting locations	Adequacy Health & Safety	L M	<p>The Parish Council and Committee meetings are held in venues considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members and the general public. Such venues are checked annually by the Parish Clerk or relevant managing committee for evidence of valid electrical and (where appropriate) gas safety certificates and current Public Liability insurance.</p> <p>(Note: See special arrangements below for meetings during Covid pandemic).</p>	Existing procedures adequate

Council records – paper	Loss through: Theft Fire Damage	L M L	The general Parish Council records are stored in the Parish Office. Records include historical correspondence, minutes, deeds, insurance and other Parish related documents. These are stored in lockable cabinets, cupboard and safe. Financial records are held at the home of the RFO. Copies of annual accounts/returns are also held securely at the Parish Office.	Security and insurance cover in place to mitigate losses.
Council records – electronic	Loss through: theft, fire damage or corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Council laptop computer held with the Clerk in the Parish Office or at her home and financial records are stored on the laptop of the RFO at home. The Clerk's electronic records are backed-up daily onto an external hard drive which is stored in the Parish Office safe. The RFO's records are backed-up regularly onto a hard drive stored at home.	Existing procedures considered adequate

COVID 19

For the duration of the pandemic, the Council will apply the principles outlined in the NALC Publication “*Risk Assessment for Covid-19*”. Specific aspects are detailed below:

Parish recreation areas	Risk of infection to users/visitors	L	Specific Covid signage is displayed alongside open-air recreation equipment at Walter Hobbs, Ted Marriage and Mill Lane recreation areas, reminding visitors of the need for and importance of social distancing and other safety measures during the pandemic.	Signage considered adequate
Millennium Park	Risk of infection to users/visitors	L	Signage at the entrances to the Millennium Park remind visitors of the need for and importance of social distancing and other safety measures during the pandemic.	Signage considered adequate
Village halls	Risk of infection to users/visitors	M	Blackmore Village Hall and Tipps Cross Remembrance Hall are administered by their own management teams who have put in place Risk Assessments and Covid safety measures specific to their premises.	Safety measures considered adequate
Parish Office	Risk of infection to users/visitors	L	The Parish Office is situated in Tipps Cross Remembrance Hall which has appropriate Covid signage and safety measures in place. The Clerk visits the office from time to time but works mainly from home during the pandemic.	Safety measures considered adequate
Council meetings	Risk of transmission through face-to-face meetings	M	For as long as considered necessary, Parish Council and Parish Committee meetings are being held remotely, using Zoom. The Parish Council has arranged a business licence with Zoom allowing meetings of the required length to take place. Meeting dates are published on the Council’s website and noticeboards and Parishioners are invited to join online Council meetings as part of the Public Forum.	Remote meetings considered adequate

Employees	Working from home	L	Where possible, the Parish Clerk is working from her safe home environment. Contact with Councillors and Parishioners is maintained by telephone or online and issues handled remotely.	Arrangements considered adequate
Meetings with contractors/ Parishioners/ other contacts	Risk of transmission through face-to-face meetings	L	Wherever possible, meetings are held remotely. If site meetings are required, these are held at safe social distance, in line with Government regulations.	Meeting arrangements considered adequate

Council to review document at least once during each financial year and action to be minuted to evidence the review

Signed Date