



Risk: Assessment and Management Policy

Purpose

To provide guidance to the Parish Council to enable it to assess and control risks associated with its activities 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 approach to managing risks by:

- Identifying relevant activities
- Identifying potential risks
- Assessing the level of risk
- Evaluating the management and control of the risk
- Recording findings
- Reviewing and revising procedures as required

Responsibilities

The day-to-day responsibilities for developing and implementing the risk management policy are managed by Clerk. Policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed on a scheduled basis at a full Council meeting by the Parish Councillors.

Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled.

- **Risk** – is the likelihood that the potential for harm or loss posed by a hazard will materialise
- **Hazard** – condition in the parish, equipment, article, substance, machine, installation or situation that has the potential to cause harm or loss or both
- **Control Measures** - precautionary measures that reduce or eliminate the risk
- **Competent Person** - someone who, by reason of their training, knowledge and experience, is considered capable of adequately assessing the health and safety risks associated with the operation being carried out
- **Residual Risk** - the risk that remains after all the identified control measures have been put into place.

Method

The Parish Council should follow these principles:

- Consider if the risk can be avoided, eliminated or transferred
- If this is not possible, then evaluate the risks that remain and identify changes to working practices that can reduce the risks (see “Risk Assessment Schedule”)
- Give appropriate instruction to Councillors, staff, contractors or public
- Review risks and control measures annually (or as required)

See also DGPC’s Risk Assessment Schedule.

Adopted and Approved at the Meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 13th May 2025

Update/Review History



Dunton Green Parish Council

Risk Assessment Schedule

| RISK ASSESSMENT SCORING MATRIX | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Negligible impact | Moderate impact | Severe impact |
| Highly likely | MEDIUM | HIGH | HIGH |
| Possible | LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH |
| Unlikely | LOW | LOW | MEDIUM |

| FINANCES | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Activity / Item | Risks Identified | Risk Level H/M/L | Management / Control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
| Precept | Adequacy of precept | L | Council reviews the precept requirement annually by reviewing budget information for the next financial year, agreeing the budget amounts and resolving the precept amount. Reserves put aside for future items of expenditure (e.g. Pavilion Maintenance). | Existing procedures adequate |
| | Requirement not submitted to DC | L | Figure submitted to SDC by email | |
| | Precept not paid to DGPC | L | Clerk checks for receipt (end Apr and end Sept) and reports to Council. Hold sufficient | |

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| | | | reserves to ensure smooth running of the Council for at least 6 months. | |
| Insurance: Parish Council Cyber Insurance | Insufficient to cover potential losses Renewal deadline missed | L L | Insurance cover is reviewed annually. Parish Council insurance includes Employers Liability. Asset register is kept up to date and supplied to insurers. DGPC has a separate Cyber Insurance policy. Renewal date does not fit with Parish Council meeting schedule - causes potential delay. Authorisation delegated to Clerk to allow action to be taken if necessary. | Existing procedures adequate |
| PAYE | Incorrect amount paid, paid late, or not at all | L | PAYE obligations are calculated using SAGE payroll software. HMRC is paid on a quarterly basis. Electronic payments allow more flexibility. Payment is reported at each relevant quarterly Parish Council meeting (for external check). | Existing procedures adequate |
| Expenditure and Income | Payments / invoices not authorised, incorrect amounts paid or requested Theft or other inappropriate expenditure taken bank a/c | L M | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for payments - these are reviewed annually. Bank statements reviewed at each meeting with DGPC's bank reconciliation documentation. For regular payments authorisation /delegation given in advance. Chair and Vice Chair have access to view banking online or by telephone. Authorisation / delegation given in advance for expenditure at the start of the year or at a preceding Parish Council meeting. Bank statements reviewed at each meeting and compared with bank reconciliation, as well as a check of all invoices. Chair and Vice Chair have access to view banking online or | Existing procedures adequate |

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| | | | by telephone. Any illegal activity to be reported to the Police for appropriate action. | |
| Cash | Loss through theft or incompetence | L | No petty cash is used. 'Cash' in the bank is covered by 'Banking' above. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Payroll | Payments or deductions calculated incorrectly | L | SAGE software is used for payroll requirements. Clerk has undertaken HMRC online training, can contact helpline for advice. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Election costs | Scheduled elections | M | For routine elections, DGPC budgets for the election year the District Council's estimate of costs for a contested election (but they have been uncontested for 30+ years). | Existing procedures adequate |
| | Unscheduled election requested by voters due to a casual vacancy | M | Unexpected election - costs much higher but cannot be avoided if requested. Would be paid for from reserves (ensure levels high enough to cover this). | |
| VAT | Claim calculated incorrectly, or made too late | L | Advice is available from HMRC (website / telephone), and from NALC. Claims made in accordance with regulations. | Existing procedures adequate |
| | Claim made too late | L | Claims are made monthly by DGPC. | |
| Accounts | Accounts calculated incorrectly | L | Accounts compiled by Clerk and checked by Internal Auditor, then presented to Councillors for review. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) | Internal Auditor not available | M | Book the internal auditor in January for an audit in April. Investigate a back-up option if main auditor not available. Final option would be a firm of auditors (noting that this would involve additional cost and delay). | |

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| | Unavailability of Councillor/s | L | Loss of an individual Councillor: follow procedures for a co-option. If Chair of Vice-Chair left, a replacement would be appointed at the next meeting. Other specific duties undertaken could be re-allocated. | DGPC is moving away from a server (which is backed up to the cloud), to a fully cloud based system from June 2024. |
| | | M | Councillor numbers reduced to less than 4 (quorum level): appointment processes followed, and advice sought from NALC and District Council in interim. | |
| | Loss of data or computers / loss of paper records (theft or act of God) | L | Data is stored in a central server (backed up to the cloud). Legally required documents are stored securely at the Parish Office. Planning documents can be re-sourced from Sevenoaks District Council (via Public Access). | |
| | Unavailability of premises (Dunton Green Pavilion – Parish Office is located there) | M | Access: keys/fobs are held by the Clerk and BFA, as well as the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Temporary unavailability of the Pavilion for meetings: an alternative would be found (Village Hall or Donnington Hall). | |
| | Epidemic or Pandemic | H | All Government and/or County District Council guidelines to be followed regarding working practices. Changes in legislation would be needed again to allow for virtual Parish Council meetings to be held. Other business activities would be put on hold until guidance allows. | |

LEGAL LIABILITIES

| Activity / Item | Risks Identified | Risk Level H/M/L | Management / Control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
|---|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Employers Liability | Insurance not in place or non-compliance with employment law | L | Policy must provide cover up to £5 million. Member of KALC (advice can be sought). | Existing procedures adequate |
| Public Liability | Risk to third party, property or individuals, including volunteers (e.g. litter picking) | M | Public liability insurance is in place up to £10 million. Third parties and volunteers are given copies of risk assessments before they start an activity. | Insurance cover is reviewed annually. |
| Legal Powers | Decisions taken are outside of the legal remit of the Council | L | All activities and payments to be taken in line with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Local Government Act 1972, and any other relevant legislation. Clerk and Councillors to make themselves aware of relevant regulations, and undertake training as required. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Transparency Code: Agendas Minutes Standing Orders Code of Conduct Financial Regulations | Correct documents not in place or out of date Information not made available at correct times in line with regulations | L | Documents produced, displayed / published and signed within given timescales (any omissions to be rectified quickly). Meetings are held in accordance with Standing Orders. Expenditure is managed in accordance with Financial Regulations. Councillors and Clerk adhere to Code of Conduct. | Existing procedures adequate |
| GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) | Information collected, stored or used incorrectly | L | Minimal information is collected therefore risk is low (contact details for Councillors, details for Clerk and suppliers for payments, contact details for hirers). Policies in place; amended or new ones adopted as required. ICO Registration in place and renews automatically. Clerk checks ICO updates (via | Existing procedures adequate |

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| | | | NALC) for changes to legislation. If in any doubt advice available from NALC. DGPC has data protection policies. | |
| Publication Scheme FOI (Freedom of Information) | Publication Scheme FOI requests not answered within timescales | L L | Reviewed at least annually. Majority of information is available on website, reducing the number of requests and time taken to respond. Remaining requests to be dealt with by Clerk in line with regulations. | Existing procedures adequate |
| (WCAG) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 | Website does not meet legal requirements | L | Current Parish Council website does confirm and includes a Website Accessibility Statement (to explain that some documents will not meet the criteria). DGPC moved to a gov.uk domain in summer 2024. | Existing procedures adequate / change in progress |
| Document Retention | Correct documents not identified, not kept for required time periods, not filed correctly or not destroyed at the correct time | L | Most documents are stored digitally on a secure device or on the website. Minimum legally required original documents are kept by the Clerk at the Parish Office. Clerk to undertake an annual review to identify documents for 'destruction' (e.g. deletion or shredding). | Existing procedures adequate |

| PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT | | | | |
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| Activity / Item | Risks Identified | Risk Level | Management / Control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |

| | | H/M/L | | |
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| Members' interests | Conflict of interest not declared; decisions not made with transparency | M/L | Councillors to declare any interest at the start of the meeting, or when a conflict becomes apparent during the meeting. Declaration of Interests form to be completed when Councillors take up their post. Councillors are responsible for keeping their register up to date as required, and annually regardless. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Code of conduct | Councillors' or Clerk's behaviour brings the Parish Council into disrepute | L | Members and staff are aware of the Code of Conduct. | Existing procedures adequate |

| ASSETS | | | | |
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| Activity / Item | Risks Identified | Risk Level H/M/L | Management / Control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
| Grounds Maintenance at: Recreation Ground Longford Meadow Longford Spinney The Rose Garden The Crescent Station Road | Damage caused by or to machinery | M | Gardens of England carry out all grounds maintenance at these sites and have their own risk assessments for their activities. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Price's Wood | Damage to trees by vandals or an act of God | M | Tree surveys completed every year by a qualified tree surgeon. Site inspected by Bookings and Facilities Assistant (BFA) weekly and checked at | Existing procedures adequate |

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| | | | intervals by Parish Councillors or reported by residents. | |
| War Memorial | <p>Damage by vandals or an act of God</p> <p>Wear and tear (potential risk to public of unsafe assets)</p> | <p>L</p> <p>L</p> | <p>Asset register maintained and items insured.</p> <p>Site inspected by BFA weekly and checked at intervals by Parish Councillors or reported by residents.</p> | Existing procedures adequate |
| <p>Street Furniture:</p> <p>Public benches and tables</p> <p>Bus Shelter</p> <p>Noticeboards</p> <p>Public litter and dog bins</p> <p>DGPC signage</p> <p>Defibrillators</p> | <p>Damage by vandals or an act of God</p> <p>Wear and tear (potential risk to public of unsafe assets)</p> | <p>L</p> <p>L</p> | <p>Asset register maintained and items insured.</p> <p>Locations inspected by BFA weekly and checked at intervals by Parish Councillors or reported by residents. Defibrillators(5 in total) are checked weekly by BFA and monthly by Sevenoaks Community First Responders</p> | Existing procedures adequate |
| Play Equipment | <p>Damage by vandals or an act of God</p> <p>Wear and tear (potential risk to public of unsafe assets)</p> | <p>L</p> <p>L</p> | <p>Asset register maintained and items insured.</p> <p>Site inspected BFA weekly and checked at intervals by Parish Councillors or reported by residents. Quarterly formal inspections carried out by Safeplay Playground Services Ltd and wear and tear identified is rectified.</p> | Existing procedures adequate |
| Street Lighting | <p>Damage by vandals or an act of God</p> <p>Wear and tear (potential risk to public of unsafe assets)</p> | <p>L</p> <p>L</p> | <p>Asset register maintained and items insured.</p> <p>Streelights Ltd complete maintenance checks and rectify any issues that they identify or that are brought to the Parish Council's attention by staff or residents.</p> | Existing procedures adequate |
| Dunton Green Pavilion | Damage by vandals or an act of God | L | Asset register maintained and items insured. Intruder and fire alarms installed. CCTV | Existing procedures adequate |

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| | Damage by hirers | M | system also in place. Damage deposit required prior to keys being released for a booking and not returned until the BFA is satisfied that there have been no issues. | |
| | Wear and tear (potential risk to public of unsafe assets) | M | A full maintenance programme is in operation to pre-empt issues and to make changes or improvements as necessary | |
| | Lone working risks for cleaner and for DGPC staff | L | DGPC has a lone working policy. The Pavilion entrance door closes and locks and can only provide unrestricted access if it has been put on the latch (which cannot be done accidentally). All staff working alone are advised to leave the door locked and to follow the procedures set out in the policy. | |

**This Risk Assessment Schedule was reviewed in May 2025.
Next review due: September 2025 (ahead of insurance renewal)**