

## WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – (Adopted 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020)

Risk assessment is a 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.

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

Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings

Identify what the risk may be

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 unexpected circumstances	H	All files and recent records are kept at the Clerk's home. The Clerk ensures all files are saved to the Cloud. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Council/Chairman to contact the SSALC for advice. Minutes, agendas, end of year accounts and other key documents from start of previous financial year to be held on a memory device at a different location – this to be updated monthly. Pin/Passwords used by Parish Clerk/RFO to be held in a sealed envelope at a different location. <u>Ability to conduct online meetings set up and agreed</u>	Existing procedures adequate. Review when necessary
Precept	Adequacy of precept. Requirements not submitted to WDC. Amount not received from WDC.	L L L	The Council reviews the Precept requirements annually, in line with Wealden District Council timetable, after committees have considered what they wish to achieve in the next year and having monitored the current year budget. The amount of precept required is submitted by the Clerk to Wealden District Council and the Clerk will notify the Council when the amount has been received (usually in two tranches).	Existing procedures adequate
Financial Records	Inadequate records. Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements	Previous procedures were inadequate but processes have been put in place to ensure better management in future. Councillors have received some basic training on some aspects and will receive more training in future.
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking cheques and reconciliation of accounts at the end of every month. The Clerk reviews the Council's banking arrangements regularly.	Policy reviewed and internet banking adopted September 2020. Controls to be reviewed annually.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council does not currently provide any services. The Council's insurance policy has a Fidelity Guarantee	Keep reviewed if Council does undertake services
Reporting and auditing	Information communication Compliance	L L	A budget monitoring statement is produced at the end of every month and presented to Council and displayed on the Council's website.	Existing communication procedures adequate

Direct costs	Goods/services not supplied but billed. Incorrect invoicing	L L	Financial Regulations are in place. All payments are signed by two Councillors and the cheque stubs and invoices initialled.  Where internet banking is used, RFO will load transactions on internet banking but payments can only be released after one councillor, who is signatory to the bank mandate, adds authorisation.  RFO sends copy of monthly bank statement/internet download to Chairman of Finance and GP Committee as part of bank reconciliation, who checks payments against budget/approved payments.	Council is moving to internet banking, but all payments will still be signed by two Councillors prior to payments being initiated.
Grants	Powers to pay. Authorisation of Council to pay	L L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of consideration and included in the minutes. Any s 137 grants are listed separately.	Existing procedures adequate.
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L L	As per Standing Orders and Financial Regulations the Council would seek competitive prices for all goods and services, usually three prices. Major contracts go out to formal tender.	The previous administration did not always comply. Councillors have received some basic training on some aspects and will receive more training in future.
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly. Wrong hours paid. Wrong rate paid. Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue	L L L L L	The Parish Council authorised the appointment of the Clerk/RFO. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council and applied 1 <sup>st</sup> April each year. The Clerk/RFO's timesheets are authorised by either the Chairman or the Chairman of F and G.P.	The Council outsources the payroll services.
Parish Clerk/RFO Incidental expenses	Mileage paid incorrectly  Other incidental expenses – eg postage, stationery paid incorrectly	L  L	Mileage claim sheet to be completed each month when claimed and checked by Chairman F&GP Committee Claims submitted for Council approval in line with Financial Regs	Existing procedures adequate
Parish Clerk/RFO	Loss of Clerk/RFO Fraud Actions undertaken Health and Safety	M L L L	A training budget should be established to enable training for existing Clerk and/or CILCA qualification in the event of the current Clerk resigning. The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. Adequate reserves to be maintained to allow for recruitment and induction costs of a new Parish Clerk/RFO	Include within the budget when setting the precept. Purchase reference books where necessary. Membership of SSAALC. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L L	Neither the Chairman or any Councillors receive an allowance but this could change in the future. Councillors are able to claim travel for attending training and other related courses.	The Council can pay an allowance to Councillors and policy to be reviewed regularly

				to ensure nobody is excluded from becoming a Councillor.
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	M	The Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from WDC to enable the Council to plan over a four year period.	Every year the Council should include an amount for future elections so that in four years there will be sufficient funds.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Financial Regulations set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate.
Annual Return and AGAR	Submit within time limits	L L	Employer's Annual Return is submitted on line by the Payroll Services provider. The AGAR should be completed in accordance with the Audit regulations.	Existing procedure adequate. The process has in the past has not been correct and this is in hand. A new Independent Internal Auditor has been appointed by the Council.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activities and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at the Full Council meetings.	To be kept under review if the Council decides to delegate any budgets to Committees in the future.
Council records – paper	Loss through: Theft Fire Damage	M M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. This includes historical correspondence, minute books, insurance. Recent materials are in a metal filing cabinet (not fire proof) and older more historical records in plastic boxes.	Damage (apart from fire and theft) is unlikely and so provision is adequate. The Council has deposited some items with the County Records Office and should keep this reviewed.
Council records – electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage. Corruption of computer	L L	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Council's computer at the Clerk's home. Back-ups are stored on the Cloud at regular intervals. Minutes, agendas, end of year accounts and other key documents from start of previous financial year to be held on a memory device at a different location – this to be updated monthly.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	M M L L	Current insurance policy has £10m Public and Employers' Liability. An annual review is undertaken, before the end of the policy renewal. Employers and Employees liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for annually.	Existing procedure adequate but should be reviewed annually with particular reference to companies who specialise in providing insurance for parish council.
Data protection	Policy Provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Commission	Review existing registration and ensure annual renewal of registration.
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L	The Council is 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 and Safety	L	The Parish Council and Committee meetings are usually held in either the Dunn Village Hall in Rushlake Green or Bodle Street Green Village Hall. The Clerk makes arrangements for (un)locking each Hall. The premises and facilities of each hall are considered adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and public who attend from Health and Safety and comfort aspects.	Existing locations adequate. Internet accessibility particularly for Planning meetings is not considered good and the Council may need to take some decisions on this matter.
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## ASSETS

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Street Furniture and Open Spaces	Loss/Damage Risk/damage to third parties/property	M M	An asset register should be kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks should be made of all equipment (seats, bins, notice etc.) by Members of the Council or the Clerk and records kept. Regular inspection of Rushlake Green Village Green, Redpale Memorial should be carried out and records kept.	Existing records are not adequate but the Clerk is working towards its completion.
Notice Boards	Risk/damage to third parties. Road side safety	L L	The Parish Council has five Notice Boards sited around the parish. All locations have approval by relevant parties, insurance cover, inspected regularly by the Clerk – any repairs/maintenance/replacement brought to the attention of the Environment Committee and included on Asset Register	Existing procedure adequate.

## LIABILITY

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal Activity or payments  Working Parties taking decisions	L L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council (not ultra vires) and to be resolved and clearly minuted.  Ensure any Working Parties have clear terms of reference.	Existing procedure adequate. Councillors have received some basic training on some aspects and will receive more training in future. Monitor regularly
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Accuracy and Legality	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed method and timescale by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council/committee meeting. Minutes and agendas are display according to the legal requirements, including on the council's website. Business conducted at Council/committee meetings should be managed by the chairmen.	Existing procedure adequate and Councillors should adhere to the Code of Conduct.  Councillors have received some basic training on some aspects and will receive more training in future.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L	Insurance is in place. Current insurance policy has £10m Public Liability cover.	Existing procedures need to be reviewed and ensure risk assessments are carried out.

			Risk assessments should be regularly carried out to comply with requirements.	
Employers' Liability	Non compliance with employment law	L	Undertake adequate training and seek advice from SSALC	Existing procedures adequate but should be reviewed.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities Proper and timely reporting via Minutes Proper document control	L 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, as per Freedom of Information Policy which can be found on website.	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	L L	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of a meeting or throughout the meeting if discovered during procedures. Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate. Members to take responsibility to update their Register.