

Blofield Parish Council Risk Assessment

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.

FINANCIAL AND 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	Loss of Clerk or Loss of Council papers/computer A business continuity plan holding simple key information has been reviewed and updated held on the OneDrive, hard copies will be held by both Clerks and the chair and vice-chair. Documents/data backed up to Microsoft cloud, two clerks in different home offices have access. Key documents on the Council website	Review the business continuity plan annually
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council regularly receives budget update information and the precept is an agenda item at full Council. At the Precept meeting Council receives a budget update report, including actual position and projected position to end the year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate
	Requirements not submitted to District Council	L	With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from the District Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing to the District Council.	
	Amount not received by District Council	L	The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (approx. May & September).	
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.

Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The bank may make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statement arrives, these would be dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. In addition, a councillor carries out ad hoc checks on all aspects of the accounts each month.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary and bank signatory list when necessary, especially after an AGM and an election. Monitor the bank statements monthly.
Finance – CIL expenditure, community hub	Overspend on the community hub project	H	The council has a project manager in place to assist with costs. 3 quotations are obtained for works where possible. No parts of the project are committed to until the funds are secured and available. Budget reports, CIL expenditure/reserve reports are reviewed monthly by the council. Two contingencies are held within the project. Possible overspends are reviewed by the cost consultants and best value obtained. During budget establishing process all possible increases in budget are being considered by the council. A Quality clerk has been employed for the build stage. During the building, all contractor invoices are checked and reviewed for accuracy and to ensure the work has been carried out before the parish council pay them.	These processes will need continuous review as the council progress from project design, to planning, to building phases.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Cash received is banked within 7 banking days. There is no petty cash or float.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Reporting and Financial Checks	Information communication Compliance	L M	A monitoring statement is produced regularly before each Council meeting with the agenda, discussed and approved at the meeting. This statement includes, bank reconciliation, and a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank, CIL funds position. Council should regularly carry out a financial review internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee. A councillor undertakes random spot checks on at least a quarterly basis.	Existing communication procedures adequate. Council annually to appoint an Internal Auditor for Fidelity Compliance.
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Loss of stock Unpaid invoices	L L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. At each Council meeting the list of invoices awaiting approval is distributed to Councillors and considered. One Councillor is nominated to check randomly identified invoices against the cheque book and associated paperwork and initials the invoices. Council approves the list of requests for payment. The Council has minimal stocks; these are checked and monitored by the Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.

			Unpaid invoices to the Council for adverts in the newsletter or services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance.	
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate. Parish Councillors request a S137 rules if required.
Grants - receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	The Parish Council does not presently receive any regular grants. One off grants would come with terms and conditions to be satisfied.	Procedure would need to be formed, if required.
Charges – rentals payable	Payments of charges, leases, rentals	L	The parish council will make payments to the two landowners (for allotments site). Documented leases now in place.	Procedures now in place to pay Lease rent and collect rental income from allotment holders.
Charges – rentals receivable	Receipt of rental	L	The Council will have income from allotments holders on an annual basis.	Procedures now in place to collect the rents on a timely basis.
Best value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly	L	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 a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Include when reviewing Financial Regulations.
	Overspend on services	M		
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid False employee Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the HMRC	L L L L L L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees through its Chair. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Council and applied on 1 April each year. Salary analysis and slips are produced by the Clerk monthly together with a schedule of payments to the HMRC (for Tax and NI). These are inspected at the Council meetings and signed off. The Tax and NI is worked out using an Inland Revenue computer programme updated annually. All Tax and NI payments are submitted in the Inland Revenue Annual Return. The Clerks have contracts of employment and job descriptions. The contracts of employment contain a section on overpayment and recoup. Ad hoc payroll checks are carried out by an appointed councillor.	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.
Employees	Loss of key personnel	L	Reference to the Continuity Plan should be made in case of loss of key personnel.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Fraud by staff	L	The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud.	

	Actions undertaken by staff Health & Safety	L L	The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. Workplace risk assessment now due.	Purchase revised books. Membership of the SLCC/Norfolk ALC. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L	No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors	No procedure required
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.	The Council should budget or keep in reserve the cost of a full bi election every year
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations. The council is now VAT registered from 1/12/2025 for the land where the new hub & preschool will be built. Quarterly returns for VAT now required via scribe. The first quarter ends 31/3/2026.	Ensure accurate coding and VAT returns made via SCRIBE quarterly.
Annual Return	Submit within time limits	L	Employer's Annual Return is completed and submitted online and to the Inland Revenue within the prescribed time frame by the Clerk. Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit.	Existing procedures adequate
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.	Existing procedures adequate
Minutes/Agendas/Notices Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	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 Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required).
	Business conduct	L	Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Members interests	Conflict of interest	L	Although not a requirement, the declaring of pecuniary or nonpecuniary interests by members at a meeting should be an obvious process to remind Councillors of their duty and should remain on the agenda.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Register of Members interests	M	Register of Members Declaration of Interest forms and the Code of Conduct should be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Members take responsibility to update their Register.
Insurance	Adequacy	L	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.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Cost	L		Review insurance provision annually.

	Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L M	Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Review of compliance.
Data protection Act 1998	Policy Provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) come into force May 2018.	Ensure annual review of registration Ensure compliance of GDPR and monitor compliance
Freedom of Information Act 2000	Policy Provision	L M	The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in draft form. There have been no requests for information to date, but the Clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work. The Council is able to request a fee if the work will take more than 15 hours but the applicant also has the right to re-submit the request broken down into sections, thus negating the payment of a fee.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the F of I Act. Review and revise this policy annually.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Assets	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision, storage and maintenance provisions.	Existing procedure adequate.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities Loss of income or performance Risk to third parties	L L L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. All assets are insured and reviewed annually. All public amenity land is inspected regularly by parish employees/councillors. Risk assessments are carried out on assets regularly.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections carried out.
Land and buildings	Risk/damage/injury to third parties and assets Health and Safety		Allotments rented land, Orchard rented land, Marty's Marsh, Courthouse, Town Pit and Churchyard, Wygates small areas 1&2.	Biannual onsite inspection (see separate forms).
Blofield Park playground, gym equipment and outdoor land	Playground equipment is used regularly and must be checked, maintained and any defects reported and dealt with promptly	H	Weekly inspections are taking place together with records kept. An annual ROSPA inspection will take place in June/July each year. Assets fully insured. Site fully secured and assessed. Fencing around forest school area secure.	Weekly and quarterly inspections and an annual ROSPA inspection to take place. Regular site inspections to take place
Year 6 classroom	To be checked biweekly for insurance whilst property empty and not undergoing building work	L	Biweekly inspection required onsite.	Detailed checklist set up for biweekly checks.

Farman Field (Wyn gates Area 3)	Risk/damage/injury to third parties and assets Health and Safety	H	An annual RPSA inspection will take place on trim trail. Site secured and assessed for safety Regular H&S assessment carried out	Procedure to be put in place
Notice boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Roadside safety	L L	Parish Council owns a number of assets which are listed in the Council's insurance cover documentation. All locations have approval by relevant parties, insurance cover, inspected frequently by councillor /clerk observation - any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Defibrillators x2 Heathlands C Centre Margaret Harker Hall	Adequacy	L	The Parish Council is responsible for ensuring these defibrillators are inspected, maintained, and updated where required. In addition, availability is managed on the 'Circuit system' ensuring they are available to parishioners 24 hours a day.	Procedure put in place
Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is responsible for four bus shelters and other assets detailed in the insurance. These are located around the village. No formalised programme of inspections is carried out, all reports of damage or faults are reported to Council and/or dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.
Meeting location	Adequacy Health & Safety	L M	The Parish Council Meetings are held at The Courthouse. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health and Safety and comfort aspects.	Existing locations adequate.
Council records – paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the Clerks home address, the Courthouse and in Archives at Norfolk County Council. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, leases for land or property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Recent materials are in a (metal filing cabinet (not fireproof)) and older more historical records in the Norfolk Archives.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision adequate. Deeds/leases copied, and originals deposited off-site with Spire Solicitors.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerks computers. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals and stored on Microsoft Cloud	Microsoft Cloud specialised back-up facility to back-up electronic files and documents produced each meeting