



Ashington Parish Council

Risk Assessment Schedule

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.

Purpose of Document

This document has been produced to enable Ashington Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces 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 is developing a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focuses approach to managing risk, which;

- Identifies the key risks facing the council
- Identifies what the risk may be
- Identifies the level of risk
- Evaluates the management and control of the risk and records findings
- Reviews, assesses and revises procedures if required.

Responsibility

Ashington Parish Council is committed to identifying and managing risks using procedures and ensuring that risks are maintained at an acceptable level. Any action that is felt necessary to undertake to reduce risks will be done so by Ashington Parish Council. The Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and nominated Councillors (Finance Committee) will review risks on a regular basis, including any newly identified risks, and report regularly to the Parish Council. The review will include identification of any unacceptable levels of risk. Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risk threatens the achievements of policy objectives. Members should therefore:

- Take steps to identify key risks facing the Council;
- Evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place;
- Decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences.

Review

Annually in May

MANAGEMENT					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L/M	<p>Active files are stored in the Cloud – more frequent saving & backing up, files accessible from different computers</p> <p>Purchase of annual Virus Protection – ensures everything is up to date</p> <p>Laptop Encryption has been done</p> <p>Clerk to give passwords in sealed envelopes to two Councillors (Chair & Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Paper records are more at risk, consideration should be given to risk of loss. Very few important documents are on paper – identify these and take electronic copies</p> <p>In the event of the clerk being indisposed the Chairman will contact WSALC for advice/support</p> <p>Clerk to show two Councillors where paper & computer files are stored and how to access</p> <p>Website managed by Radikls so full backup & admin access in place. Facebook page owner is Emma Johnston’s Business (previous clerk) & no means to remove her from this role but she can’t recall login details so likelihood of deleting page is minimal plus signed leaver agreement stating that she would return all Council property and deletion could be a breach of this. Two Admins are in place (Parish Clerk & Radikls)</p>	Review annually	Clerk

	Loss of Clerk	L	Clerk's personal mobile phone was being used. PC purchased its own phone in December 2019 and added it to asset register.		
		M	Employment contract specifies notice period. WSALC can assist with recruitment and provide locum services. Additional expenditure for recruitment, handover periods etc. HR Consultancy may be needed, unexpected cost. Maintain contingency budget & reserves.		
	Loss/resignation of Councillors	L	Not enough Councillors to achieve quorum. Contact WSALC/HDC for advice. Clerk can keep essential business going but invoices may be unpaid etc. Add more bank account signatories to minimise the risk.		
Meeting Location	Adequacy Health and Safety	L	Meetings are held at Ashington Church of England Primary School, or any Ashington Community Centre Trust building, all of which have disabled access. The clerk is made aware of each venues health and safety policy. Fire exits & evacuation procedure announcement before each meeting	Review annually	Clerk
Council records – paper	Loss through theft, fire, flood or other damage	L	Paper records are stored at the home of the Clerk/RFO and Ashington Community Centre. The provision is considered as adequate. Very few important documents are on paper – identify these and take electronic copies The Document Retention & Disposal Policy is reviewed annually in October.	Review annually	Clerk

Council records – Electronic	Loss through damage, fire, flood, corruption of data	M	Electronic records are stored on laptops at the Clerks/RFOs homes. Cloud based file storage has been implemented – more frequent saving & backing up, files accessible from different computers (password protected) Up to date Virus Protection via annual subscription Laptop Encryption has been done Clerk to give passwords in sealed envelopes to two Councillors	Review annually	Clerk/DPO
Staff	Fraud Actions carried out	L L	Fidelity guarantee in place via insurance. Councillors carry out quarterly review of bank reconciliation. Clerk undertakes monthly bank reconciliation. Electronic Payment Control in place – 3 authorisers from 4 possible Regular reporting of actions completed and outstanding via reports to council/committees. Staff are adequately trained and review carried out via appraisal process.	Review annually Review annually	RFO (Finance Committee/Internal Auditor) Chairman/Staffing Committee/Councillors

FINANCE					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Precept	Adequacy of precept to allow the Council to carry out its statutory duties	M	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept. The Council receive budget information quarterly. The budget is set and agreed with the Finance committee during November and is ratified at the December full council meeting. The precept is agreed by the Council in January. The process is backed by the Financial Regulations and reviewed by the internal audit. Council maintains a good level of cash reserves in case Precept is not paid (recommended by NALC to be 3-12 months of annual Expenditure). Levels of reserves are scrutinised at budget setting time of year. Financial risks are identified. Use of Earmarked Reserves for planned large-scale expenditure	Existing procedure adequate	RFO
Other income		H	Council owned land currently generates £1620 pa in rent. If the tenant gives notice to quit then income will be at risk. Formulate contingency plan.		
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L L L M	There is an annual review of all insurance arrangements in December. Adjusted annually according to levels of cash reserves	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk (RFO/Internal Auditor)
Banking	Inadequate procedures	L	The Clerk informs the Council when monies are received. The financial regulations are comprehensive and set out all the requirements including details of bank reconciliations (monthly by RFO, quarterly by a Councillor)	Review via Financial Regulations annually in May.	RFO (Finance Committee)
Cash	Loss via theft or dishonesty	L	No petty cash held.	Existing procedures adequate Review via Financial Regulations annually.	Clerk/RFO

Financial controls and records	Inadequate checks Financial irregularities	L	Two councillor signatories/approvals on cheques and invoices and online payment controls. Monthly expenditure is recorded in the minutes. Internal and external audit. Any s137 payments recorded. Financial regulations are in place.	Review via Financial Regulations and internal controls annually.	Clerk/RFO
Salary & Overtime Payments	Incorrect payment or process	L	Payroll outsourced to WSCC. The Clerks salary adjustments are approved by the Council and communicated to WSCC by standard forms which have to be signed by two Councillors	Existing procedure adequate.	WSCC/Clerk
VAT	Reclaim not processed	L	Reporting to Council via financial reports. The Financial Regulations set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate.	RFO
Annual Return	Not submitted within time limits	L	RFO & Council aware of timing process by 30 th June, Annual return completed and signed by the council, submitted to the internal auditor for section completion. Checked and sent on to the external auditor.	Existing procedures adequate	RFO

PROCEDURAL

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Freedom of Information	Non-compliance with Act	L	The Council has a model publication scheme in place.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk/DPO
	Request for Councillor correspondence held on Councillor's personal IT equipment	L	All Councillors issued with Parish Council email address and all Council correspondence is done through this.		
	PC information on Clerk's personal laptop.	L	Clerk issued with PC laptop and only PC work done on this, no confusion with personal material. Copy of passwords etc to Chairman/Vice Chairman with clear instructions on how to access files/emails.		
Data Protection & IT Governance	Non-compliance with Act	L	Ashington Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioners Office. Reviewed annually in October	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk/DPO

		L	A review of the processes was carried out in October 2018 to ensure the Council is compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Introduce documented procedure. A review is currently underway (2026) to ensure compliance with new guidelines.	Existing procedures adequate	
LIABILITY					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments Committees and working groups exceeding delegated authority	L L	All activities and payments made within the powers of the parish council, resolved and clearly minuted. Council is a member of WSALC/NALC and seeks advice when considered appropriate. Clear referencing. Standing Orders set out guidelines	Review annually Adequate procedures in place	Clerk
Minutes, Agendas and standing documents	Accuracy and legality Non-Compliance with Statutory requirements	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed off at the next meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at the council is managed by the chairman with advice from the clerk Standing Orders & Financial Regulations based on NALC models	Adequate procedures in place	Clerk
Public liability	Risk to third party property or individuals	M	Insurance is in place, risk assessments are undertaken. Written copies are kept and action lists prepared by the Clerk who ensures that actions are carried out. Annual Inspection of Council land takes place to see if any works are needed eg dead trees, overgrowing vegetation etc. Written Record & Action list produced.	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk
Employers Liability	Non-Compliance with legal requirement	L	Insurance in place.	Adequate procedures in place	Clerk

Legal Liability	Legality of activities	L	Clerk adequately trained and has access to advice via WSALC and SLCC membership	Maintain membership of WSALC/NALC and SLCC	Clerk
COUNCILLOR PROPRIETY					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Code of Conduct	Non-compliance	M	Adopted code 2012. Councillors received training from HDC monitoring Officers in February 2017.	Review Annually.	Clerk
Members Interests	Conflict of interest	M	Agenda item on every meeting	Existing procedures adequate Review Annually	Clerk
	Failure to register interests	L	Councillors aware of duty and reminded regularly about requirements. Clerk willing to give informal advice.		

EMPLOYEES					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Clerk	Lone Working	L	Lone Working Policy in place. First adopted in September 2015. For review in July each year	Policy review July each year	Clerk

ASSETS					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Lead
Asset Register	Assets not recorded	L	An asset register is established and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Minutes of meetings record amendments.	Existing procedures adequate Reviewed every time a new asset is purchase or when disposed of.	Clerk
Maintenance of assets	Poor maintenance leads to loss or injury Poor performance of assets or amenities.	L	All assets owned by Ashington Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs are actioned and authorised in accordance with the correct procedures	Existing procedures adequate	Clerk
<i>LIST OF INDIVIDUAL ASSETS and REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES</i>					
Play areas	Loss or Damage Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L L	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks made of all equipment by trained volunteers. Annual inspection carried out by registered play inspection company.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance requirements annually.	Qualified playground inspectors – Councillors (Clerk)
Noticeboards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L L	Ashington Parish Council has 3 notice boards sited around the village. All locations have approval by relevant parties, have insurance cover, and are inspected each time notices are updated. Any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate	Clerk
Street Furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	Ashington Parish Council is responsible for various items (i.e. bins, seats, bus shelters, picnic benches etc) around the village. Routine inspections are carried out, all reports of damage or faults are reported to Council and/or dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.	Clerk
Draft prepared November 2019					
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