

Approved at 6th March 2024 Parish Council Meeting (Min Ref: 24.406.16)

The 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 Weston on the Green Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

1. Financial and Management

Category	Risk (s) identified	H/M/L Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its Statutory duty	L	To determine the precept amount required, Council receives quarterly budget update information. At the budgeting meeting Council to receive a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. 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 Cherwell District Council. The figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing.	Ensure clerk delivers timely, quarterly updates and utilises actuals and projected position for next budgeting cycle.
Budget Provision and Reserves	Insufficient available funds or late payment of precept by District Council	L	A full budget is developed in advance of the precept request. This should include funds placed in reserve for future projects, elections, equipment replacement, a contingency fund and three months' running costs (based on last year's running cost numbers). Council reserves would cover Council costs should the precept payment	Existing procedure adequate.

			be late from the District Council or an insurance claim was made.	
Financial Records, Inadequate Records	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which sets out the requirements. Internal control checks are carried out by an independent person – Henry Donne for FY 2023-24. Existing procedures to be reviewed and signed off annually. Internal auditor appointed each year.	Review of financial regulations approved by full Council in May 2023.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks	M	Existing procedure ensures 2 councillors are sited on all payments made. Payments processed are reconciled by the Clerk. Invoices received are logged and tracked by the Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Bank mistakes	L	Monthly reconciliation of all payments made by Clerk. Clerk undertakes quarterly reconciliation of full accounts.	
	Cheque mistakes	L	Cheques to be written by the Clerk following inspection of the invoices and signed by two Councillors as per agreement at a PC Meeting. Cheque and cheque counterfoil to be signed or initialled as per Financial Regulations 2023.	
Reporting and Auditing	Information communication	L	Financial information is a regular agenda item, all invoices listed by item to be discussed and reviewed at each meeting.	Quarterly update on status provided by the Clerk.

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	Audit process completed to required timescales	L	Required documentation submitted to Internal Auditor for review within required timeframe. External Audit Annual Return completed, signed by the Council and submitted within the required timeframe. All documents published on PC website within the required timeframe.	Existing procedure adequate.
Grants	Receipt of grants	L	Parish Council receives any grants the Council apply for.	Clerk to monitor and ensure PC receives all expected grants.
	Power to pay grants by Parish Council	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and detailed if a payment is made using S137 powers of expenditure.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges	Rents receivable	L	The Parish Council currently receives rent from Ardley United Football Club for hire of the playing field. To be reviewed annually.	Clerk to monitor and ensure PC receives annual rent from Ardley United Football Club.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices / Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed manor by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements including publishing on the Meeting Agendas, Papers and Minutes section of the Parish Council Website. Minutes are approved and signed at the next council meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Standing Orders	M	To be reviewed and agreed during each financial year.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Financial Regulations	M	To be reviewed and agreed during each financial year.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Business Conduct	L	Agenda displayed and provided to Councillors according to legal requirements.	

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			Members advised of Councillor Code of Conduct. Council approved County Code of Conduct. Business conducted at Council meetings managed by the Chair.	
Councillors	Losing a Councillor	L	When a vacancy arises there is a legal process to follow which leads to either a by-election or a co-option process. The more usual is a co-option which starts with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting. The Council tries to draw members from around the Parish to make sure each area is represented.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Losing more than four Councillors to make the Council inquorate	M	If there are more than four vacancies at any one time, the Council becomes inquorate and the District Council will take over the running of the Council (at the Village's expense). 3 months running costs held in reserve.	Procedures of Cherwell District Council are adequate.
Members Interests and Code of Conduct	Conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest made by members at all Council meetings.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Code of Conduct	L	Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022 adopted by Parish Council in May 2023.	Issue Code of Conduct to all Councillors on election.
	Register of members' interests	L	Register of members' interest forms reviewed regularly.	Members take responsibility to update register.

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Insurance	Adequacy & Compliance	L	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements. Employers and Employee liabilities are a necessity within policies. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Fidelity cover for employees included in insurance cover – the clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer. New 3-year insurance policy taken out in May 2023..	
	Cost	L	Full insurance review undertaken in 2023 and a new 3 year policy taken out in May 2023. Clerk and finance advisory group obtained quotes and confirmed appropriate policy.	Existing procedures adequate.
Data Protection	Policy provision	M	Data Protection Policy adopted by PC in June 2023. The PC is registered annually with the Information Commissioner.	Existing procedures adequate.
Freedom of Information	Policy	M	Model Freedom of Information Publication Scheme approved at June 2023 PC meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Provision	M	The PC is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create a number of additional hours work.	Monitor any requests made under FOI.
Document Retention	Policy	L	Document Retention Policy approved at June 2023 PC meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.

2. Physical equipment / areas

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review /Assess / Revise
Assets	Loss or damage	L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision.	Existing procedures adequate.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained.	Existing procedures adequate.

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			All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. Assets are insured.	
Notice Board	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council currently owns one notice board and 4 planter noticeboards. The Clerk checks the condition when posting notices.	Existing procedures adequate.
Street Furniture	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council is responsible for 18 benches, 5 dog litter bins, litter bins, 4 salt bins, 4 sets of village gates & planters and 3 picnic benches. No formalised programme of inspections is carried out (apart from when undertaken as part of playground/spinney monthly report), but all reports of damage or faults are reported to the Council and dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.
Stocks Green	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council is responsible for the open area of land on the Stocks Green, including the stocks. An annual inspection to be undertaken on the Stocks.	Inspection of the Stocks to be undertaken by the Works Advisory Group and any repairs required highlighted to the Council.
Playing field and Play Area Equipment	Risk of damage	M	The Parish Council is responsible for the playing field and play area. A monthly inspection is undertaken and reported to the PC meeting. A RoSPA safety inspection on the play area is carried out annually. General maintenance repairs to be actioned following advice in annual report.	Existing procedure adequate.
Playing Field	Increased use of the playing field for social events results in greater	L	Current insurance policy is sufficient.	Existing procedure adequate.

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	chance of liability for the Parish Council			
Playing field and Spinney	Risk of injury due to poorly managed trees	M	Following the purchase of the spinney by the Parish Council the management of the trees, and the risk associated with them, sits with the Council. A regular tree audit (major audit every 3 years) will be undertaken by an arboriculturist and advice discussed by the Council. A tree audit is booked for 4 th April 2024. Monthly playground inspection includes assessing risks in the general playing field area and spinney.	Existing procedure adequate. Arboriculturist inspected the spinney trees in 2022 and discovered the existence of ash die-back. 31 trees were felled in Jan 23.
Spinney – Picnic Area	Risk of fire or accident due to BBQ use in the picnic area	M	Picnic benches by the stream could potentially encourage use of a BBQ. OCC BBQ/fire advice to be made available via communication channels.	A comment on sensible use of the area added via communication channels.
Spinney Stream	Risk of injury due to lack of awareness of stream	M	Whilst there is no fence between the spinney and playing field there is a natural barrier which highlights the change in environment.	
	Risk of injury from being trapped in the pipe/tunnel in the stream	L	Tunnel and pipework is not so small that children could get stuck so risk here is low. If children are seen playing in this area consider facebook message to parents warning them of the hazard.	Add advice to owner of tunnel regarding sweeping of debris to annual list of maintenance jobs.
Gallosbrook stream, adjacent Bletchingdon Road	Risk of injury to road users due to lack of awareness of stream at edge of road	H	Bollards to be kept trimmed and cleared so they remain visible. Included as part of current grass cutting contract.	

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Parish verges and highway visibility	Risk of appointed grass cutting contractor unable to fulfil his contract	M	Council to monitor verge visibility during key growing season and check that the contractor will be able to cut it. Organise volunteer cutting if required to ensure visibility maintained at a safe level on highways.	Existing procedure adequate.
North Lane Pond	Risk to reputation due to slow speed to act when North Lane pond dries up and RSPCA are called in	M	Water levels in the pond to be regularly checked, especially during the summer months, and any issues reported.	A Councillor on North Lane asked to monitor water levels in the pond and report back to the Council. Fish removed from pond in 2022 but to be monitored in 2023/24 in case of return.
Oak Tree Pond and North Lane Pond	Risk of injury due to pond bank subsidence and build up of silt/sludge	M	Undertake regular review of pond areas to assess risks. Ensure edging is appropriate to aid likelihood of not entering pond. Extension and repair of rotten wooden edging among central North Lane pond undertaken in 2023. Substantial work undertaken on Oak Tree pond during 2022 with addition of stone edging to water section of pond.	Existing procedure adequate.
Meeting Locations	Adequacy	L	The Parish Council meeting is held in a venue considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members and the general public.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Health and Safety	L		
Council Records – Paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the village hall and in the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records.	Existing procedures considered adequate.

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			Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate. Appropriate archiving of documents to be undertaken.	
Council Records – Electronic	Loss through: theft fire damage	L L L	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Clerk’s laptop held with the Clerk at home. The data is constantly backed up to OneDrive in the Cloud and a physical backup is taken regularly. Antivirus software is also used to prevent corruption of the computer.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
Mobility Scooters in Village	Risk of accident on Church Road/Church Lane as residents use mobility scooters to reach village amenities	M	Implementation of 20mph speed limit on Church Lane supports safer traffic movements. Current insurance policy covers the Council.	Action plan in place.
Village Maintenance	Risk of necessary maintenance works around the village taking too long to action resulting in risk to reputation of the Council	M	The Council has a strong works team and utilises volunteers to undertake works in the village. Additional volunteers are however always welcomed and are beneficial.	Council requests volunteers to help via various sources.
Flooding	Risk that flooding due to bad weather, and limited maintenance of local ditches create areas of localised flooding which impacts local roads and PC property such as the playing field and spinney.	L	Highlight the need for local residents and landowners to review their drains and ditches and make sure they are cleared out. PC has highlighted importance of clearing ditches to local landowners. In 2023 a Councillor undertook the maintenance of various private landowner ditches to aid water flow through the village.	Action plan in place.
Antisocial Behaviour	Risk that limited local resources for teenagers result in antisocial behaviour in areas of the Parish e.g.	L	Highlight incidents to be reported to 101 so an evidence base can be compiled, and local policing teams can then increase their patrols of the area.	Action plan in place.

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	the spinney that causes damage to PC property or raises safety concerns for local residents.		Ongoing issues to be highlighted to the community policing team by PC. PC liaison with community policing team and Neighbourhood Watch team. Clerk/Neighbourhood Watch to advertise procedure of reporting incidents to 101 in Village News/PC Facebook Page when required.	
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3. Rental of Playing Field by Ardley United Football Club

Category	Risk (s) identified	H/M/L Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Safeguarding	Safeguarding of children	L	Parish Council obtained a copy of Ardley United Football Clubs Safeguarding Children Policy.	Clerk to ensure PC has the latest version each year.
Communication	Misunderstandings between parties surrounding the agreement for renting the playing field	L	The Parish Council and Ardley FC have signed a Terms of Agreement for hiring the playing field.	Terms to be reviewed annually.
	Village feel uninformed of when playing field in use	L	Ardley FC to provide indication of when pitch required at start of the season. Parish Council to place this information onto PC website.	Clerk to ensure all mediums are kept up to date when new information available.
Damage	Damage to playing field and surrounding boundaries, fences and gates	L	Parish Council existing insurance policy covers damage to these areas. The areas are checked as part of the works report submitted to the Parish Council each month.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
	Damage to equipment owned by Ardley FC and retained on playing field	M	Ardley FC have been made aware of the key factors relating to the Parish Council's insurance policy. Ardley FC have confirmed that they have their own insurance to cover potential damage and that their goals can remain in place.	

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Litter	Additional litter problems with increased use of playing field	L	Litter in the area to be monitored. If considered a problem a further bin could be added e.g. in the car park.	None evidenced so far but monitoring by the Council ongoing.
Car Parking	Car parking on residential streets causing distress to residents	M	Notice highlighting no car parking on residential streets to be placed on noticeboard at the playing field. Ardley FC have been advised of a potential car parking issue with residents and have included instructions of where is suitable to park in their notes to families for matches i.e. car park and extended into playing field if required.	Ongoing monitoring and feedback to Ardley FC by the Council required.
Flooding	There is a risk that the PC isn't able to deliver on its contractual obligations to Ardley FC to provide an accessible playing surface for football.	L	Potential flooding has been highlighted as a concern to Ardley FC. Ardley FC to be advised when the pitch is waterlogged/flooded.	Ongoing monitoring and feedback to Ardley FC by the Council required.

4. Risks associated with the management of the playing field and spinney now owned by the Parish Council

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise
Management	Risk that future management costs of the spinney are not known.	M	Costs to be monitored going forwards with information used to continuously inform the budget process. It is noted that funding for any improvements to the spinney or playing field were likely to come mainly from grants, not Council Tax driven public funds.	Finance Group to review as part of the annual risk review of the council and the annual budgeting process.
	Risk that maintenance of playing field and spinney not undertaken adequately.	L	Parish Council to appoint a contractor to undertake monthly maintenance of the area – to be discussed at March 2024 PC meeting. Effectiveness to be monitored during 2024.	Existing procedures considered adequate.

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			Grass is currently cut by volunteers.	
	Risk that young people may congregate in the spinney or playing field area resulting in antisocial behaviour that impacts the lives of villagers or low level criminal damage against PC property.	L	Mitigation is to make villagers aware of the use of the area, consult with the neighbourhood police team on practical actions that can protect PC property and help prevent antisocial behaviour escalation, and review the risk in line with the PC's annual risk register review.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
Ownership	Risk that the Parish Council doesn't know what legal entity is best placed to own the playing field.	L	The Finance Group discussed appropriate ownership of the playing field and spinney in 2020. At the present time the deeds list the Parish Council as owner. This risk will remain on the PC risk register for review in future years to ensure the land continues to be best protected for the future.	To review in future years.
	Risk that the Parish Council is not best placed to act as a custodian of the playing field asset to protect it for future generations of village residents.	L	The Finance Group acknowledged in 2020 that in many cases villages have set up a separate group to manage assets such as a playing field. Following discussion the Finance Group was satisfied that the PC was able to pull in advice from the relevant bodies e.g. Woodland Trust, Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association to enable effective management of the asset at the current time.	Retained on risk register to review as part of the annual risk review of the council.

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5. Covid 19 risk assessment for Parish Council – in depth risk assessment to be carried out should the need arise again

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review /Assess / Revise
Impact of Increasing Covid Infection Levels	Increase in cases affecting the completion of normal Parish Council business. Understanding of Government guidance.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government guidance to be followed should the number of cases rise substantially. - Village Hall updates to their guidance to be adhered to – sanitising, ventilation procedures, masks, table spacing, limit on members of public attending would be considered. - General scheme of delegation implementation to be considered. 	Existing procedures considered adequate.

6. Traffic and Transport Risks

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review /Assess / Revise
Community Speedwatch programme	Volunteers not appropriately trained and risk injury. Anti-social behaviour towards volunteers by members of the public. Theft of equipment.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to be covered by the Police insurance volunteers are required to be registered on the Community Speedwatch website and complete a short on-line training video. - Hi-viz jackets are provided for use throughout the session. - Volunteers are advised not to stand in the road at any time. - Monitoring to be undertaken by a minimum of 2 volunteers at any time and recommended that one person is equipped with a mobile phone. 	Existing procedures considered adequate.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The equipment should not be operated during bad weather. - Volunteers are advised not to leave the equipment unattended and not to block footpaths. 	
Community bus	<p>Vehicle does not have required insurance, MOT or road tax. Parish Council not have sufficient funds to operate vehicle. Scheme not reliable and objectives not clear to residents.</p>	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicle insurance and road tax purchased - to be reviewed annually. - Lead of Transport Advisory Group (Graham Barnett) and Finance Advisory Group reviewed quotes. Should G Barnett leave a suitable alternative or Parish Councillor would be named as lead to ensure the process is managed appropriately. - Resident donation covered start-up costs and a budget line has been included in FY 2023-24 & 2024-25 budgets. - Usage and costs to be monitored for future years and a review provided to the Council. Discussion on future provision to be undertaken pre-budget setting. - Grants to be applied for to support running costs where possible. - Information to be provided to residents via Village News and Parish Council website. 	Existing procedures considered adequate.