

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 is being drafted in March 2014 and will be held by the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair	Review the business continuity plan annually
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to District Council	L 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. 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	Existing procedure adequate

	Amount not received by District Council	L	by the Clerk in writing to the District Council. The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (approx May time).	
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 arrive, these would be dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction.	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.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Cash received is banked within 3 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, budget update, and a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank. 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	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.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.

	Unpaid invoices	L	The Council has minimal stocks; these are checked and monitored by the Clerk. 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 land owners (for allotments site). Documented leases do/will exist.	Procedures need to be established. Due to delays with leases procedures will be established during 2014/15
Charges – rentals receivable	Receipt of rental	L	The Council will have income from allotments holders during 2013/14 and going forward	Procedures need to be established. Due to delays with leases procedures will be established during 2014/15.
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	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	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.

	Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the HMRC	L	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 Clerk has a contract of employment and job description. The contract of employment contain a section on overpayment and recoup.	
Employees	Loss of key personnel Fraud by staff Actions undertaken by staff Health & Safety	L L L L	Reference to the Continuity Plan should be made in case of loss of key personnel. The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud. The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.	Existing procedure adequate. 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 which set out the requirements	Existing procedure adequate
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	Existing procedures adequate

			External Auditor within time limit.	
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, including a reference to the power used.	Powers have been minuted from March 2012 date
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 none pecuniary 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.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Cost	L	Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for.	Review insurance provision annually.
	Compliance	L	Ensure compliance measures are in place.	Review of compliance.
	Fidelity Guarantee	M	Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	
Data protection Act 1998	Policy Provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency	Ensure annual review of registration
Freedom of Information Act 2000	Policy	L	The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in draft form.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the F of I Act. Review and revise this policy annually.
	Provision	M	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.	

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.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections carried out.
Notice boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L L	Parish Council owns a number of assets which are listed in the councils 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.
Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is responsible for three 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 Broadland District 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 fire proof)) 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 deposited off-site.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage corruption of computer	LM	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerks computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals.	Hard-drive specialised back-up facility to back-up electronic files and documents produced each meeting

Reviewed and completed by Rob Christie, David Ward, Barry Cawkwell, Nigel MacPherson, Roy Allgood and Sarah Osbaldeston in March 2014.

To be reviewed annually.