

COATES PARISH COUNCIL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY – JULY 2023

Risk management is a systematic general examination of conditions, activities and environmental factors that will enable Coates Parish Council to identify any potential risks inherent in its practices.

The Council should take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate risks, insofar as is practically possible, making sure that all Councillors and employees are aware of them.

This document has been produced to enable the Council to manage the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

The following plan is 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.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risks Identified	HML	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	All files and recent records are kept at the Clerk's home. The Clerk makes regular back-ups of files to the Coates Parish Council Dropbox account. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed, in the short term the Councillors will take over the role as far as is reasonable, and in the long term the Chairman will contact GAPTC for advice, in particular as to whether one of its Locum Clerks should be taken on.	Existing procedures adequate. Review when necessary.
Precept	Adequacy of precept; Requirements not submitted to CDC; Amount not received by CDC	L	The Council generally reviews the precept requirement annually at its November and January meetings. It considers the presented budget update information, including the actual and projected position to year end and the estimated figures for the next financial year. It agrees its budget for the next year, and calculates the precept to be requested from CDC which is submitted by the Clerk. The Clerk informs the Council when monies are received (generally in April.)	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial records	Inadequate records; Financial irregularities	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually, or earlier if required.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT				
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Bank and banking	Inadequate checks; Bank mistakes; Loss; Charges	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking and reconciliation of accounts. These include preparation by the Responsible Finance Officer of Schedules of Payments to be reviewed and authorised by the Council. Bank Reconciliations are verified quarterly by a Councillor and all banking arrangements are regularly reviewed.	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 on receipt.
Reporting and auditing	Information; Communication; Compliance; Internal Control Procedures	L	A budget monitoring statement is produced before each Council meeting and discussed and approved at the meeting. A full list of payments and receipts to be signed is provided at each meeting. The records, including a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank statement, are presented and checked by Councillors at each meeting. Reviews of financial records and controls are undertaken quarterly by a Councillor to ensure compliance with current Financial Regulations.	Existing communication procedures adequate. All Councillors should check financial records.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risks Identified	HML	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods not supplied, but billed; Incorrect invoicing; Cheque payable incorrect; Loss of stock; Unpaid invoices	L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. At each Council meeting the list of invoices awaiting approval is distributed to Councillors, and considered. The Council approves the list of requests for payment. The Council has minimal stocks, which are checked and monitored by the Clerk. Unpaid invoices to the Council for advertisements on the Council website are pursued and, where possible, payment is obtained in advance.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually, or earlier if required.
Grants and support payable	Power to pay; Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the Council's Grant Application process. It is minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S.137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate. Parish Councillors request a copy of S.137 rules if required.
Best value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly; Overspend on services	L M	As per Financial Regulations, normal Parish Council practice would be to seek more than one quotation for any goods or services. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with a contract, the Clerk would investigate and report back to the Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.

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Subject	Risks Identified	HML	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
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 Inland Revenue	L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of employees at its meetings. Salary rates are assessed annually and applied on 1st April. Salary is paid through the PATA payroll service: hours claimed are reported to the Council. Tax and NI is worked out by PATA on behalf of the Parish Council and signed off quarterly. Tax and NI payments are submitted in the HM Revenue & Customs Annual Return by PATA on behalf of the Council. The Clerk keeps a record of hours worked and has a contract of employment and job description.	Existing systems for appointments and payroll are adequate.
Clerk	Loss of Clerk; Actions undertaken; Health & Safety	L	A contingency fund should be established to enable training for the CiLCA qualification. The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.	Include in financial statement when setting precept. Existing procedure adequate. Purchase reference books where necessary. Membership of GAPTC.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	VAT should be claimed annually. The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate, but should be regularly reviewed.

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Annual Returns	Submit within time limits	L	The Internal Audit can be undertaken at any time of the year, and the Internal Auditor's Statement can be completed as soon as the Parish Council receives the documentation from the External Auditor. The Council must approve the entire Annual Governance and Accountability Return, including the Internal Auditor's Statement. Both the AGAR and the Employer's Annual Return must be completed and submitted to HMRC within the prescribed time limit by the Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate.
Legal powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	When making decisions the Council should identify the relevant legal or legislative power enabling it to act and can seek advice from GAPTC of which it should be a member. All activities of the Council and payments made by it should be discussed at full Council meetings and be minuted.	All activities and payments minuted
Council records – paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	LML	It is the responsibility of the Clerk to ensure that Council records are securely stored at his/her home, including Minutes, correspondence, books and documents relating to property ownership, personnel, insurance and salaries. Historical records should be kept safely by the Council or transferred to Gloucestershire Archives in accordance with the National Association of Local Councils Legal Topic Note 40 (Local Councils' Documents and Records.)	The Council must be satisfied that these storage arrangements continue to be adequate.

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Council records – electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire, damage Corruption of computer	L M	The Parish Council’s electronic records are stored on a Council computer at the Clerk’s home. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals stored both on an external thumb drive and in dropbox.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance	L L L	An annual review is undertaken (before policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. Ensure compliance measures are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance provision annually. Review of compliance.
General Data Protection Regulation Data Protection Act	Policy Provision	L	The Council must continue to be aware of its responsibilities regarding DPA and GDPR. It is registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office.	Ensure annual renewal of registration.
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L M	The Council has 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.

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Meeting location	Adequacy, Health & Safety	L M	Council Meetings are held at the Village Hall and are attended by Councillors, the Clerk and members of the public. The Clerk holds a key to the building and will carry out a Risk Assessment of it when required. The Clerk will make relevant bookings for such meetings and arrange for access to the building. The Council will follow any official guidance to mitigate risk at meetings.	Existing location and facilities are generally adequate, but must be kept under review.
ASSETS				
Subject	Risks Identified	HML	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Street Furniture, Play Area Equipment and Open Spaces	Loss, Damage Risk to third parties and property	L	The Council's Asset Register is reviewed and updated annually, as is adequate insurance cover for all registered assets. Regular checks of playground equipment are carried out (on behalf of the Council) in accordance with checklists supplied by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Play Safety Team, which also carries out annual inspections. Reports are received by the Council, acted upon and minuted.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Asset Register and insurance requirements annually.
Noticeboard	Risk, damage or injury to third parties Roadside safety	L	Location is approved by relevant parties. Noticeboard is insured and inspected by the Council which will undertake any necessary repairs.	Existing procedure adequate.

LIABILITY				
Subject	Risks Identified	HML	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments; Working parties taking decisions	L L	All activities of the Council and payments made by it (not ultra vires) should be discussed at full Council meetings and be minuted. Ensure that any working parties are established with clear terms of reference.	Existing procedure adequate. Monitor on a bi-monthly basis.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality; Business conduct	L	Minutes and agenda for meetings should be produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the following Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chairman.	Existing procedure adequate. Training may be given, as necessary. Members should adhere to Code of Conduct.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance is in place and risk assessments are carried out as required. The Council will follow any official guidance to mitigate risk in connection with its meetings and other responsibilities.	Existing procedures adequate, but should be reviewed, as necessary.
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	The Council maintains adequate insurance to cover possible liability. Advice can be sought from GAPTC where necessary.	Existing procedures adequate.

LIABILITY				
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Legal Liability	Legality of activities; Proper and timely reporting via Minutes; Proper document control	L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves Minutes at bi-monthly meetings. Data Retention and Disposal Policy is being put in place.	Existing procedures adequate.
COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY				
Subject	Risks Identified	HML	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Councillors' Interests	Conflict of interest; Register of Members interests	M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of the meeting. Register of Members Interest forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate. Members to take individual responsibility to review and update their Registers.