

Market Weston Parish Council Risk Assessment

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

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Level	Management/control of Risk	Action
FINANCIAL & MANAGEMENT				
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Banks mistakes	L	Bi monthly reconciliation and internal audit review carried out annually.	Existing procedure adequate.
		L	New banking procedures which allow online authorisation by multiple signatories.	Completed.
Best value accountability	Work awarded incorrectly. Overspend on services.	L M	Normal Parish Council practice would be to seek, if possible, more than one estimate or quotation for any substantial work to be undertaken. For major work competitive tenders would be sought. If problems encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation and report to the Council. The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that quote/tender requirements are at the appropriate levels.	Existing procedure adequate.
Budget/Precept	Adequacy of budget/precept in order for the Council to carry out its Statutory duties	L	When setting the annual budget, the Council receives 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 determines whether the budget under each heading has been adequate and adjusts for the following year. The precept is determined, considering the projected position at the beginning of the next financial year and preservation of earmarked funds. The figure is submitted to West Suffolk Council on the form provided. The Clerk informs the Council when the monies are received. The Council monitors the adequacy of the budget through bi monthly budget reports. A contingency sum is included and funds	Existing procedure adequate.

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			are earmarked for unforeseen items such as by-elections and parish polls.	
Data protection	Policy	L	The Council adopted GDPR policies including Information Security Incident Policy and Information Protection Policy in May 2018 and these will be reviewed annually. The Council appointed a third-party Data Protection Officer. This is no longer a requirement. All unwanted records destroyed by incineration or shredding	Existing procedures adequate.
	Registration	L	The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner with automatic annual renewal.	
	Insurance	L	The Council has Public Liability insurance up to £10,000,000. The Council also has legal defence cover for a civil claim made against the Parish Council, up to £250,000. Gallagher cover from Continuous cover from 01/10/2024 until the policy is cancelled	
Employees	Fraud by staff Health and safety Staff Issues	L M L	Holiday, long-term sickness and resignation covered in Clerk's contract.	Existing procedures adequate. Update policy. Existing procedures adequate
End of Year Finances (Annual Return)	External audit questions. Submitted late.	L L	The Annual Return is checked thoroughly by the Clerk, Council and Internal auditor for completeness. The Annual Return is completed and submitted within the prescribed time frame by the Clerk.	Existing procedures adequate. Existing procedures adequate.
	Submitted with incorrect info.		The Return submitted to a SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments) approved internal auditor for completion and signing; inspected and signed by the Council; and submitted to the Government appointed external auditor.	Existing procedures adequate.
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements and these are reviewed annually.	Existing procedure adequate.
Freedom of Information	Policy Provision	L L	The Council has a Model Publication scheme in place. To date there have been no requests under FOI. The Council is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create additional work and a fee can be requested.	Monitor any requests made under FOI
Grants received	Non- receipt of grant	L	Income is reported on the agenda at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.

Grants and support made to others	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the process of approval, is minuted and listed accordingly.	Existing procedure adequate.
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Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance	L L L	Insurance arrangements are reviewed annually. Advice from internal audit report concerning levels of cover and compliance is taken.	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments Inability to meet to resolve activities and payment at full Council Meetings	L M	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved at full Council Meetings, including reference to the power used (for new or one-off payments) under the Finance section of agenda, except where Financial Regulations allow for Clerk-approved expenditure. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to allow for emergency delegation of powers to resolve activities and payments outside of meetings, with arranged authorisation.	Existing procedures adequate Amend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
Members interests	Conflict of interests Out of date register of members interests	L M	Declarations of interest by members at meetings recorded. Register of members interests forms reviewed regularly and presented on website.	Existing procedure adequate. Members take responsibility to update register.
Minutes, agendas, Notices and Statutory Documents`	Not accurate or legal Business conduct	L L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manor by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Agendas are displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair. Members adhere to Suffolk Code of Conduct adopt 19 th May 2022 reviewed May 2025	Existing procedures adequate. Existing procedures adequate.
Reporting and auditing	Information not communicated	L	Financial information is reviewed and approved at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly. Unpaid Tax to HMRC. Unpaid Pension payments.	L L	A pay slip is available for inspection at each meeting – expenses (except mileage) paid on production of receipt. Payments made bi monthly and are detailed for Councillors inspection. Payments made bi monthly and are detailed on the agenda.	Existing procedures adequate.
VAT	Not identifying/ reclaiming	L	VAT is recorded under a separate heading in the budget spreadsheet and is claimed within the period allowed. The amount is reported to the Council when received.	Existing procedures adequate

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THIRD PARTIES OR INDIVIDUALS				
Libel & Slander	Insurance		Insured to £250,000. All members sign up to the Suffolk Code of Conduct.	Existing procedures adequate.
Personal Accident	Insurance		Insured for Councillors and Clerk on Parish Council business.	Existing procedures adequate.
Third Party	Insurance		Action to minimise risk to third parties as below at council-owned property. The Council has no other public liabilities. Insurance cover in place to £10 million covering employees, councillors and volunteers acting on behalf of the Council.	Existing procedures adequate.

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EMPLOYER LIABILITY				
	Employment Law	L	Contract of Employment in place for Clerk. Grievance and Disciplinary procedures in place. PAYE is operated. Pension requirements are met.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Health and Safety	M	The Clerk works from her own home. The Council provides updated IT and office equipment as required. Where deemed appropriate, all persons operating machinery and equipment must be appropriately trained. The Contractor shall provide adequate proof that all operatives are well trained and conversant with Health and Safety legislation, competent in their operating methods and compliant with current Suffolk County Council Highways regulations.	Existing procedures adequate. Existing procedures adequate.
	Insurance	L	Insurance cover in place to £10 million	Existing procedures adequate.

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PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS				
Assets	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third party's property	L L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision. Insurance in place as per Gallagher Continuous cover from 01/10/2024 until the policy is cancelled	Existing procedures adequate
Maintenance inc play area	Poor performance of assets or amenities.	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. Assets are insured. A qualified person (RoSPA) is employed to carry out a monthly and annual technical inspection. Any item of equipment found to be in a state of disrepair is refurbished or taken out of service.	Existing procedures adequate.
Meeting locations	Adequacy	L	The Council meetings are held in a venue considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members and the general public.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Accessibility	M	The meeting venue is wheelchair accessible.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Health & Safety	M	The Clerk records presence at meetings. Members and public are aware of fire exits/procedures in the event of an emergency. The Council has put in place emergency procedures in case of pandemic, etc (see Emergencies).	Existing procedures adequate.
Council records – paper	Loss through: Theft Fire Damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk in a file cabinet in a locked property. Some historic documents are stored at the County Records Office.	Existing provision is adequate. Deposit further documents at Records Office.
Council records – electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire damage or corruption of computer	L	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Clerk's computer and backed up on Dropbox.	Existing provision is adequate.

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EMERGENCIES (SUCH AS COVID-19)				
Meetings	Spread of Disease (e.g. Covid-19 Coronavirus)	L	<p>Social Distancing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Parish Council will use conference calls instead of face to face meetings where possible. 2. When face to face meetings are allowed to be held, the PC will ensure that the venue (following references are to the Market Weston village hall) is adhering to government guidelines. https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Information-Sheet-COVID-19-Opening-your-hall-after-lockdown-15.6.20-Final.pdf 3. The PC will arrange the meeting layout to reduce the number of persons in any one area to comply with the gap currently recommended by the Public Health Agency. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing 4. The PC will arrange the access layout to achieve one-way movement through the venue from the entrance (through side door) to the exit (through front doors). Where possible, given the necessity to keep fire doors closed, doors will be propped open to discourage touching surfaces. <p>Cleaning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Clerk will set up chairs and tables, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that will be touched using appropriate cleaning products and methods. Following the meeting, the Clerk will clean and disinfect surfaces again and put away furniture. 2. The Clerk will clean and disinfect any objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, particularly in areas of high use such as door handles and light switches. <p>Hand washing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PC will ask all attendees to use gel sanitisers on entrance to the venue and before exiting. Where there are hand washing 	These actions will continue as long as advised by government and the Public Health Authority.

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			<p>facilities in the venue, use will be discouraged in order to minimise the amount of movement and contact within the venue.</p> <p>2. The Clerk will sanitise hands before and after cleaning.</p> <p>PPE:</p> <p>1. The PC will encourage all attendees to use some type of face covering or mask.</p> <p>2. The Clerk will wear gloves for cleaning.</p> <p>Symptoms of Covid-19:</p> <p>1. The PC will inform potential attendees that they should not attend the meeting if they or anyone in their household has Covid-19 symptoms.</p> <p>2. The PC will contact the Public Health Authority for advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken if advised that a recent attendee has developed Covid-19.</p>	
Recreation Ground	Spread of Disease (e.g. Covid-19 Coronavirus)	M	<p>The PC will secure the recreation ground as far as possible while the law continues to require outdoor play areas to remain closed. Clear signage will confirm that the site is closed to comply with the law.</p> <p>The PC will take the following actions if reopening the site is permitted.</p> <p>It is not reasonably practicable to clean the play equipment without staff on site and some surfaces do not lend themselves to cleaning (thus the M level risk). However, the equipment is exposed to the elements which provides some level of protection over time. The PC will address short-term transmission opportunities with the following:</p> <p>1. Clear signage which explains that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. parents allow their children to use the facility at their own risk; b. parents are responsible for supervising their children, including making sure that hands are sanitised on entering and leaving the site and that they observe social distance; 	These actions will continue as long as advised by government and the Public Health Authority.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. parents should not let children enter the play area unaccompanied, or when it is already occupied to the point that social distancing becomes difficult; d. parents should dispose of all litter in the bin provided, including any used protective wear; and e. parents should report any contamination concerns to the Clerk. <p>2. Prompt publicity of any changes in policy through the website, Facebook and notice boards.</p>	
Site Visits and Meetings held by other organisations	Spread of Disease (e.g. Covid-19 Coronavirus)	L	<p>The PC will encourage the use of conference calls instead of face to face meetings where possible.</p> <p>The PC will ask staff and councillors to adhere to government guidelines on social distancing and hold meetings outdoors where possible. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing</p> <p>The PC will encourage staff and councillors to use some type of face covering/mask.</p>	These actions will continue as long as advised by government and the Public Health Authority.