

Rackheath Community 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 was produced and presented to the Community Council meeting on 16th December 2024 to enable the Community 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 annually.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

| Topic | Risk | H/M/L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
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| Business Continuity | Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance | L | There will be a business continuity plan put in place | Draw up plan and review when necessary |
| Precept | Adequacy of precept | L | To determine the precept amount required, the Community 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 by the Clerk in writing to the District Council. The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received. | Existing procedure adequate |
| | Requirements not submitted to District Council | L | | |
| | Amount not received by District Council | L | | |

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| Financial Records | Inadequate records Financial irregularities | L L | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. | Existing procedure adequate. Financial Regulations updated to current NALC version and to be reviewed when necessary. |
| 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 does make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statements arrive, these are 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 or as soon as is practical. Contactless receipts of payment to be made by BACs or cheque. There is no petty cash or float. | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regs annually Avoid keeping cash income |
| Reporting and Auditing | 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 audit internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee. | Existing communication procedures adequate. Internal Council Auditor to ensure Fidelity Compliance |
| Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts | Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Loss of stock Unpaid invoices | L L L L L | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. At each Council meeting the list of invoices for payment is produced for approval by the Community Council. One Councillor is nominated to check each invoice against the cheque book and associated paperwork and initials the invoices. Council approves the list of requests for payment. The Council has minimal stocks, these are checked and monitored by the Clerk. Unpaid invoices to the Council for services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance. | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually. Internal auditor checks monthly payment lists against invoices & monthly bank reconciliation totals against bank statements |
| 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. | Council has General Power of Competence so need not rely upon s137. To be reviewed after PC elections 2027. |

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| Grants - receivable | Receipts of Grant | L | The Community Council does not presently receive any regular grants. One off grants would come with terms and conditions to be satisfied. Banked and entered in Scribe | Procedure would need to be formed, if required. |
| Charges – rentals payable | Payments of charges, leases, rentals | L | The Community Council owns the Doctors Surgery, Pavilion and Jubilee Park and Stracey Playing Field. Invoices issued for hire fees/charges and payment followed up if not received by due date and/or reported to CC. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| Charges – rentals receivable | Receipt of rental | L | The Clerk issues an agreement of rules and requirements which is signed by a representative from each club and kept by the Community Council copy is held in Community Council records. Fines are made for contravening rules. Payment by BACs or cheque is received and banked. The Community Council is notified accordingly. | Existing procedure adequate. Review agreement and fees annually. |
| | Insurance implication | M | The Football Clubs and hirers arrange their own insurance for their given activity and provides a copy to the Community Council each year. The Council provides Public Liability cover for any claims relating to Council negligence. | Ensure payment is received on time and view insurance documents. |
| Best value Accountability | Work awarded incorrectly | L | Normal Community 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 Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue | L L L L L L | The Community Council authorises the appointment of all employees through an adhoc Appointment Committee. Salary rates are assessed annually and applied on 1 April or anniversary of appointment each year. Salary breakdown forms are produced by the payroll provider monthly together with a schedule of payments to the Inland Revenue (for Tax and NI). These are inspected by Internal Auditor and payment approved at monthly CC meetings. All Tax and NI payments are submitted in the Inland Revenue Annual Return. Each staff member has a contract of employment and job description. The Clerk and Booking Assistant keep a time sheet. All contracts of employment include info on overpayment and recoup. | Existing appointment and payment system is adequate. |
| Employees | Loss of key personnel | L | Reference to the Continuity Plan should be made in case of loss of key personnel. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| | Fraud by staff | L | The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud. | CiLCA Completed July 2021. |

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| | Actions undertaken by staff | L | The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. | Membership of the SLCC/NPTS. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and insurance regularly. |
| | Health & Safety | L | Relevant risk assessments to be undertaken and shared with all relevant personnel. | |
| Councillor allowances/expenses | Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction | L | No allowances are allocated to Community Councillors but expenses may be claimed and checked by the RFO. | Expenses approved in advance and the correct procedure followed. |
| Election costs | Risk of an election cost | L/M | An earmarked fund is set aside for this purpose. 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. | Existing procedure adequate |
| 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 by the payroll provider to the Inland Revenue within the prescribed time frame. 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 External Auditor within time limit. | Existing procedures adequate |
| Legal Powers | Illegal activity or payments | L | All activity and payments within the powers of the Community Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Community Council Meetings, including a reference to the power used. | Powers are now operated under GPoC. Last adopted May 2023. |
| 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. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair. | Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required). |
| | Business conduct | L | | Members to adhere to Code of Conduct. |
| Members interests | Conflict of interest | L | The declaring of 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 Interest forms 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. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| | Cost | L | | |
| | Compliance | L | Ensure compliance measures are in place. | Review insurance provision annually. |

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| | Fidelity Guarantee | M | Ensure Fidelity checks are in place. | Review of compliance. |
| Data protection | Policy Provision | L | The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency | Ensure annual review of registration. 2024/25 covered. |
| Freedom of Information Act | Policy | L | The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place, majority of info is available on the CC website. | Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. |
| | Provision | M | No requests for information have been received to date but the Clerk is aware that if a substantial request arrives, which 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. | |
| Pavilion and Stracey Playing Field | Safety of staff, hirers and contractors | L | Employers and Public Liability Insurance is in place to protect those who access the building. Risk Assessments prepared separately and provided to all personnel. | Risk assessments reviewed annually as a minimum. |
| | | M | Business operates in line with Government restrictions. | |
| | Fire risk assessment and electrical safety | L | External contractor to carry out annual inspection and Clerk to feedback findings to the full Council. Fire procedures included in all hire bookings and shared with staff and contractors on site. An L1 alarm system was installed in December 2021. | Review annually. |

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 | L | All assets owned by the Community 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 Council. | Existing procedure adequate. Ensure inspections carried out. |
| | Loss of income or performance | L | All assets are insured and reviewed annually. | |
| | Risk to third parties | L | All public amenity land is inspected regularly by parish employees. | |
| Notice boards | Risk/damage/injury to third parties | L | Community Council has 2 notice boards sited around the village. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| | Road side safety | L | All locations have approval by relevant parties, insurance cover, inspected regularly by the Clerk - any repairs/maintenance requirements | |

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| | | | brought to the attention of the Community Council. Keys held by the Clerk. | |
| Street furniture | Risk/damage/injury to third parties | L | The Community Council is responsible for the village sign, seats, bus shelters, dog and litter bins around the village and covered by insurance (see policy schedule). No formalised programme of inspections is carried out, all reports of damage or faults are reported to Council and dealt with. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| Meeting location | Adequacy Health & Safety | L M | The Community Council Meetings are held at the Pavilion or another appropriate venue. The premises and the facilities should adhere to Government guidance ensuring the safety of staff, Councillors and public to include normal Health and Safety and comfort aspects. | Existing locations adequate. Consideration of technology upgrade to allow for hybrid meetings in the event of legislation change. |
| Council records – paper | Loss through: theft fire damage | L M L | The Community Council records are stored in the Community Office at the Pavilion. Records include historical minute books and copies correspondence, leases for land or property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Files are stored in locked metal storage facilities 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 Community Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerks computer. Documents are backed-up on MS One drive thereby accessible from other PCs. | Electronic files accessible from other PCs. Passwords notified to nominated member of the Council. |