

COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2022
(Reviewed March 2023)

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Coffinswell Parish Council is committed to identifying and managing risks, using the following procedures, and to ensuring that risks are maintained at an acceptable level. Any action that is felt necessary will be taken up by Coffinswell Parish Council.

The Parish Councillors will review risks at a minimum yearly, including any newly identified risks. The review will include identification of unacceptable levels of risk.

The approach to local council audit requires councils to provide an assessment of the ways in which business and other risks are managed in order that corporate governance arrangements are strengthened, stewardship of public funds are improved and assurance provided to taxpayers. The failure to manage risk effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation as well as an impediment to the achievement of the desired aims of the Council.

The Local Councils Governance and Accountability Guidance makes the following observations regarding risk management.

1. Risk management is not just about financial management; it is about setting objectives and achieving them in order to deliver high quality public services.
2. The new approach places emphasis on local councils strengthening their own corporate governance arrangements, improving the stewardship of public funds and providing assurances to taxpayers.

It goes on to state that members of the Parish Council are ultimately responsibly for risk management because risk threatens the achievement of objectives. Coffinswell Parish Council is well placed to undertake this as many features of risk management are already well established and are effectively part of the day-to-day operations undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council by the Chair, the Clerk and the RFO. The Government's requirement for the preparation of a formal document outlining a Council's assessment of its risk management process does afford the opportunity to adapt, improve and document existing processes. Members of the Parish Council should, therefore:-

- a) Take steps to identify key risks facing the Council
- b) Evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place
- c) Decided upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences.

COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – MARCH 2023.

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				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Rating H/M/L	Management / Control of Risk	Status
Business Continuity	Risk of the Parish Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	<p><u>Loss or long-term incapacity of the Clerk</u> In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chairman to contact DALC who can provide a list of locum clerks.</p> <p><u>Loss of Councillors</u> Temporary Councillors to be co-opted as necessary.</p>	<p>Existing procedure adequate.</p> <p>Existing procedure adequate.</p>
Council records - paper	Loss through theft, fire, damage	L	<p>The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk.</p> <p>Records include historical correspondence, minute books and insurance and accounts documents</p>	<p>Loss through theft or damage is unlikely.</p> <p>Existing procedures adequate</p>
Council records - electronic	Loss through theft, fire, damage or corruption of computer	M	<p>The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the clerk's computer which is kept at home.</p> <p>Back-ups of the files should be taken at regular intervals on an external hard drive which is kept at an alternative location</p> <p>Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals using OneDrive</p>	<p>A change of policy is required with the purchase of an external hard drive to be kept by a councillor.</p> <p>Existing procedures adequate.</p>

Website	Webmaster (Clerk) not being able to function Loss of passwords	L	Webmaster (Clerk) is able to maintain website. Copy of all passwords used by the website to be kept by Clerk and a Councillor. Teignbridge DC provides back up and resource.	Existing procedures adequate Consideration should be given to councillor being trained to maintain website.
Meeting Location	Adequacy of Health & Safety	L	Meetings are held either in the church or vestry. The premises and facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, councillors and any Public who attend from a health and safety and comfort aspect. A Health & Safety review is made annually by the Parochial Church Council	Existing location is adequate
Precept	a) Adequacy of precept b) Requirements not submitted to Teignbridge District Council c) Amount not received from Teignbridge District Council	L	a) To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council regularly receives budget update information and the precept is an agenda item at the December meeting. Amount requested is based on actual spend and estimated expenditure for the ensuing year. b) this figure is submitted by the RFO in writing to Teignbridge District Council. c) The RFO informs the Council when the monies are received (by way of budget update report)	Existing procedure adequate. Existing procedure adequate. Existing procedure adequate.

Financial records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which sets out the requirements. These financial regulations are reviewed annually for adequacy and improvements. The Council has appointed both internal and external auditors.	Existing procedure adequate.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has no petty cash or float. Any cash transactions are made by the Clerk or Councillors, are fully receipted and then reimbursed by BACS or cheque.	Existing procedure adequate.
Banking	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. BACS payments and cheques require two signatures, there are three nominated Councillors as signatories (any two to sign)	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations and bank signature list annually, especially after an AGM and an election.
Direct costs and Overhead expenses Debt	a) Incorrect invoicing b) Cheques/BACS incorrect c) Debts outstanding	L	a) and b) All payments to be approved by Councillors at a meeting and all invoices to be checked. All payments must be clearly minuted. Two authorised signatories are required to sign cheques or authorise BACS payments. c) The Council does not allow debt	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.

Remuneration and other costs	a) Remuneration calculated and paid incorrectly b) Tax and NI implications	L	The Parish Council has one regular employee, the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk's remuneration is reviewed annually and is based on industry remuneration scales. Payments are calculated by H Lee (Accountant) and are approved at the Council meeting. Tax and NI matters are dealt with by H Lee (Accountant) and the Clerk.	Existing procedures adequate.
Insurance	Inadequate cover Competitive costs	L	A review of insurance cover and premiums is carried out annually prior to renewal	Existing procedures adequate
Data Protection	Policy and provision	L	The Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency (ICO)	Registration to be renewed annually
Freedom of Information Act	Policy and provision	L/M	The Council has a model publication scheme for local councils in place. The Council has not received any requests for information to date. The Council is able to request a fee if the work required to provide information would take more than 15 hours. The Clerk will monitor and report the impact of any requests made.	Existing procedures adequate
VAT	Failure to maintain proper records and to reclaim VAT where appropriate	L	The Parish Council has controls and procedures in place to ensure that VAT is reclaimed as appropriate. The RFO reviews the position and makes a claim where necessary	Existing procedures adequate

Annual Return	Failure to submit within time limits	L	Annual return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing, then checked and sent to the External Auditor within the time limit	Existing procedures adequate
Election Costs	Risk of election cost	M	Risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having a contested election. A contingency fund should be established to meet the costs in the relevant financial year.	Include in budget when setting precept.
Councillors and employees	Loss of Clerk Fraud Actions undertaken	M L L	Adequate training to be arranged for Clerk and for Councillors to be provided with the necessary information for them to carry out their duties effectively. Insurance requirements to be adhered to.	Monitor working conditions Membership of DALC maintained
ASSETS				
Maintenance of Parish Council assets	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. Regular checks are made on all benches, equipment etc by members of the Parish Council	Existing procedures adequate

Notice Boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council has two notice boards sited around the parish. Both locations have approval by relevant parties and are inspected regularly by the Clerk and Councillors – any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Keys are held by the Parish Clerk and nominated Councillors.	Existing procedures adequate. Noticeboards not currently insured. RFO/Clerk to arrange insurance cover.
LIABILITY				
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	Existing procedures adequate
Minutes/Agendas/ Statutory Documents	a) Accuracy and legality b) Business conduct	L L	a) Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. b) Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair	Existing procedures adequate. Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities	M	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice from Teignbridge DC where necessary Insurance cover of £250,000 for Libel and	Existing procedures adequate

			Slander	
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	Employers Liability Insurance is in place with £10,000,000 indemnity limit. Undertake adequate training and seek advice from DALC/District Council where necessary.	Existing procedures adequate
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L	Public Liability Insurance cover of £10,000.00 is in place	Existing procedures adequate
COUNCILLORS PROPRIETY				
Members interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members Interests	M L	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of a meeting Register of Members Interests form to be reviewed at least on an annual basis	Existing procedures adequate Members to take responsibility to update their register