

# **BENHALL AND STERNFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND RISK ASSESSEMENT**

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## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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

The Council 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. The 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 Chairperson and the Clerk. 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.
- d)

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Risk Assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace and business activities and environmental factors that will enable the Council to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or in its practices. Based on a recorded assessment the Council should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible, making sure that all members of the Council 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.

This risk assessment is clearly one of value-judgement. Risk identification can be daunting as it can lead to a long list of potential threats with no sense of their relative importance. There is no 'right' answer in terms of evaluation of potential risk as one Council's view may vary from another's depending upon particular circumstances in each Parish.

The tables below are put forward for consideration by the Parish Council and are aimed to be a starting point for the development of a system of risk management by the Council.

<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>RISK (H, M OR L)</b>	<b>IMPACT (H, M OR L)</b>	<b>CONTROLS</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL ACTION</b>
Activities conflict with statutory objectives of the council	L	L	Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct in place. All of which are reviewed yearly as a minimum.	
Conflict of interest of Councillors	L	H	Declaration of Interests is on the agenda at every Parish Meeting and councillors are required to inform the Chairman accordingly. Register of Interest is updated annually.	
Councillor skills insufficient	L	M	Councillors encouraged to attend courses for Parish Councillors via SALC and maintain an interest in continuing education, reporting back to full council where appropriate.	
Lack of adequate Data Protection	L	L	Parish Council registered with Data Protection Agency and yearly subscription paid.	
Failure to adhere to legal requirements and keep parishioners informed	L	H	Minutes and Agendas are produced in the accepted format and adhere to legal requirements. Agendas and Minutes are displayed on the noticeboards (3) and website. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations,	

			Code of Practice available on website. Risk Assessments and Asset Register available on website	
Loss of Council Records	L	H	Clerk to back-up computer records regularly. Other Councillors to ensure adequate back-up of their records. Paper records kept in safe, fire-proof storage. Website information is backed up by the provider.	
Inadequate insurance	L	M	Annual review of Insurance cover to ensure that liability and fidelity insurance is adequate.	
Contracts of employment not adequate	L	L	Regular reviews of Clerk and RFO's contracts with the guidance of SALC to ensure they are in line with current legislation.	
Lack of adequate maintenance of assets	L	L	All assets owned by the PC are regularly inspected and maintained. All assets are insured.	
Unsafe play equipment on village green/uneven surface etc.	L	H	Monthly inspections by maintenance person, and Parish Councillor. Annual inspection made by ROSPA accredited inspector. Areas of concern raised in the report are actioned as recommended.	
Trees &/or branches falling on road or	L	H	Annual inspection of trees on PC public amenity land carried out by qualified tree surgeon.	

cars/people				
Meeting locations do not conform with Health and Safety guidelines	L	L	All PC meetings are held in a hired meeting room in Benhall Ex-Serviceman's Club who are responsible for ensuring that relevant safety standards are met.	
<b>Commemorative Beacon</b>				
Unsafe access to beacon	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access gained for checking and filling beacon by use of high access equipment or ladder. Two people present at all times.</li> </ul>	
Sparks/flames reach buildings, roads, vehicles, village green	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beacon to be sited a minimum of 20 metres from buildings and public road.</li> <li>- Vehicles on the village green to be parked at least 20 metres from the beacon</li> <li>- Surrounding grass and vegetation to be cut down</li> <li>- Fire extinguisher and fire blanket nearby</li> </ul>	
Unstable structure	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beacon and pole to be inspected regularly and each time before use</li> </ul>	
Incorrect materials	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beacon basket to be checked before use to remove highly inflammable objects (aerosols, fireworks etc)</li> </ul>	

Sparks/flames reach members of the public	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members of the public kept at a safe distance by marshals (Councillors) at each event</li> <li>- Children to be supervised at all times</li> <li>- Fire blanket on site</li> <li>- Responsible persons present who know what to do in the event of a fire and how to treat burns and burning clothing.</li> </ul>	
Strong winds, inclement weather	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillors to make the decision whether to abandon event if weather unsuitable.</li> </ul>	
Burning materials fall from beacon basket	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No loading above top rim of basket</li> <li>- Beacon checked by nominated people whilst still burning.</li> </ul>	
Unauthorised use of beacon	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beacon only to be used for national events and other events with the agreement of the Parish Council.</li> </ul>	