

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL – RISK ASSESSMENT

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 mitigate the risks, insofar as is practically possible. Making sure that all employees and councilors 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
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
Key , High , Medium , Low

| Topic | Risk | H/M/L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
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| Precept | Adequacy of precept | L | To determine the precept amount required, the Parish 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. | Existing arrangement adequate |
| | Requirements not submitted to District Council | L | 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 Council has developed a business plan which will inform the Councils budget strategy going forward. This plan is to be reviewed in 2023/24. |
| | Amount not received from District Council | L | The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received | Existing arrangement adequate |
| Financial Records | Inadequate records | L | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. | Existing procedure adequate. Financial Regulations are reviewed as required to reflect the increasing size of the authority and are based on NALC model documents. Standing Orders/Financial Regulations reviewed March 2023. |

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| | Financial irregularities | L | The records are subject to both internal and external audit. Money can only be withdrawn from the bank account under signature of two councillors, who are independent of the financial record keeping. Segregation of duties are in place where feasible. | Current arrangements adequate. |
| Bank and Banking | Inadequate checks | L | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary and bank signatory list when required. Monitor the bank statements monthly. The Council is proposing to move over to online banking in the near future to facilitate more efficient payments reducing the need to physically undertake in person branch visits. Current signatories are in the process of being updated to reflect the changes post-election. |
| | Bank mistakes Loss Charges | L | If the bank makes occasional errors in processing cheques this would be discovered when the Clerk/Deputy Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statements arrive. Errors would be dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. | |
| Cash | Loss through theft or dishonesty | L | Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for handling transactions. Cash transactions are limited | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary. |
| Reporting and Auditing | Information Communication | L | A monitoring statement is produced regularly at each main Council meeting, discussed and approved at the meeting. | Existing communication procedures adequate. Budget monitoring reports are reported to Policy Resources & Communications Committee periodically. |

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| | Compliance | L | <p>This includes, bank reconciliation, and a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank.</p> <p>Council should regularly audit internally to comply with the Fidelity Guarantee requirement and insurance thresholds kept under review.</p> | Council appoints an appropriate independent Internal auditor to provide assurance on the control environment in operation within the Council. |
| 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 | <p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.</p> <p>At each Council meeting the list of invoices paid is distributed to Councillors, and considered</p> <p>Each Councillor who signs the cheque also checks each invoice against the cheque book and associated paperwork and initials the cheque stub as evidence of this.</p> <p>The Council has minimal stocks, these are checked and monitored periodically where necessary.</p> <p>Unpaid invoices to the Council for use of the playing field are pursued by the clerk/deputy clerk and reported to Council as appropriate.</p> | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary. |

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| Grants and support - payable | Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay | L | All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minutes and is listed accordingly. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| Grants - receivable | Receipts of Grant | L | The Parish Council does not presently receive any regular grants. One off grants would come with terms and conditions to be satisfied. | Procedure would need to be formed, if required and be influenced by the conditions associated by any grant funding received. |
| Best value Accountability | Work awarded Incorrectly | L | Normal Parish 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. | Existing procedure adequate. This area is kept under review and amended as required. |
| | Overspend on services | L | 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. | |
| Salaries and associated costs | Salary paid incorrectly Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to HMRC | L | The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees. All staff are paid on National Joint Council (NJC) rates. All salary calculations/Tax/NI and pension contributions are calculated by a payroll provider and paid over directly by the Council. All is subject to the internal audit. | Existing procedure adequate |
| Employees | Insufficient resources available to continue to operate effectively. | L/M | Vacant posts would be advertised and another appointment made. In the event of the Clerks role being vacant assistance of neighbouring parish | Existing procedures adequate |

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| | Fraud by staff | L | <p>clerks would be sought or utilise locum support.</p> <p>Insurance cover held provides in the event 'key employees' ('Clerk') absent for extended period of time</p> <p>Covid risk assessments –working practices have been assessed and appropriate measures established.</p> <p>Financial Regulations in place. Segregation of duties in operation to reduce the risk of fraud</p> | <p>Existing procedures adequate</p> <p>Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and Insurance regularly.</p> <p>Fidelity guarantee insurance in place and kept under review</p> |
| | Actions undertaken by staff | L | <p>The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance to be adhered to with regards to Fraud.</p> | <p>Independent Internal auditor appointed to review the accounts and procedures annually</p> |
| | Health & Safety | L | <p>The Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role.</p> | |
| Councillor allowances | Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction | L | <p>No allowances are currently allocated to Parish Councillors with the exception of the Chairs allowance</p> | <p>Existing procedure adequate</p> |
| Election costs | Risk of an election cost | L | <p>Risk is higher in an election year. 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</p> | <p>Existing procedure adequate</p> |

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| | | | 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. However reserves are held to cover the likely cost based upon the estimated cost supplied by the district council from time to time. | |
| VAT | Re-claiming/charging | L | The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements | Existing procedure adequate |
| 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 procedure adequate |
| Minutes/Agendas/Notices Statutory Documents | Accuracy and legality | L | Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk/Deputy Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to the legal requirements. | Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to Chair should be given (if required). |
| | Business conduct | L | Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair. | Members adhere to Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. |
| Members interests | Conflict of interest | L | Although not a requirement, 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. Guidance notes have been provided to members. | Existing procedure adequate. |

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| | Register of Members interests | L | 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. | Existing procedure adequate. New Insurance contract let in June 2023. Entered into a 3 year term agreement 2023. Review insurance provision annually. |
| | Cost | L | Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. | |
| | Compliance Fidelity Guarantee | L | Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place. | |
| Data protection | Policy | L/M | The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner. Automatic renewal set up. | Ensure annual review of registration. |
| Freedom of Information Act | Policy | L | The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place. | Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Minimal requests received. |
| | Provision | L | The Council is able to request a fee if the work will take more than 15 hours. | |
| Code of Conduct | Failure to comply with this will be reported to the MSDC Monitoring Officer | L | The Clerk is therefore able to offer suitable advice re compliance. Councillors are offered training. The clerk has access to NALC resources if further support is required. | Existing procedure adequate however scheduled to be reviewed 22023/24. |