

Ruskington Parish Council – Risk Management Scheme

Reviewed and adopted on 16 July 2024.

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For review in April 2025.



Mission Statement

The Parish Council provides services for, and manages and maintain the assets of, Ruskington within the resources provided by the annual precept and other incomes, considering the wishes of the residents and obtaining value for money.

Ruskington Parish Council has a legal requirement to give assurance that risks in the organisation are identified and appropriately managed. Failure to manage risks effectively can lead to harm, loss or damage in terms of both personal injury but also in terms of loss or damage to the Parish Council's reputation; financial loss; potential for complaints; litigation and adverse or unwanted publicity.

The Parish Council recognises employing staff, managing premises and finances all involve a degree of risk and is building an integrated approach to the overall management of strategic and operational risk.

All functions of the Council are continually assessed and analysed for risk. Public and Personal Liability Insurance cover reflects this priority.

Aim	Risk	Method used to minimise risk	Person/s responsible
<p>1. Legislation. Compliance with all government legislation, the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Including: <i>Freedom of Information</i> <i>Data protection</i> <i>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</i> <i>Local government legislation</i> <i>Equality of opportunity</i> <i>Racial equality</i> <i>Disability legislation</i> <i>Employment legislation</i> <i>Any additional formally issued legislation – either temporary or permanent – as Resolved by Full Council</i></p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge of regulations and codes</p> <p>b. Absence of Standing Orders or other policies/ legislation.</p> <p>c. Lack of commitment to following regulations and procedures.</p> <p>d. Items purchased without approved tendering procedures – risk of accusation of commercial favouritism.</p> <p>e. Payments made without prior approval and adequate control.</p> <p>f. VAT incorrectly accounted for resulting in large tax bill from HMRC.</p>	<p>Councillor and staff induction and training Ensure councillors, clerk and RFO have access to the current and adopted regulations, policies, and procedures (website, shared folders and paper copies) including the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, and issued with the Good Councillors Guide (or the link to this.)</p> <p>Ensure a policy control document is kept and updated, and all policies are produced for review, revised as required, approved, and adopted on an annual basis.</p> <p>Training for councillors and Council employees References to relevant regulations at council and committee meetings. Ensure appropriate delegation of powers to the councillors, committees, Clerk and RFO and compliance with procedures. Ensure all councillors are aware of the tendering process. Three estimates to be obtained for all purchases over an agreed amount.</p> <p>Ensure all payments are approved in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and recorded accurately.</p> <p>Signatories limited to the council and committee chairmen. Prompt removal of bank signatories following resignation as a councillor. No cheque or cash payments made.</p> <p>Use of appropriate real-time accounting software that the RFO / Clerk is confident to use.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk RFO All councillors</p> <p>Clerk Chairman</p> <p>Chairman Clerk All councillors</p> <p>Clerk Chairman RFO Relevant committee</p> <p>RFO Clerk</p> <p>RFO Clerk</p>

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<p>2. Priorities and Risks To identify and regularly review the Council's priorities and risks.</p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge and commitment by council members.</p> <p>b. No risk assessing carried out and no steps taken to reduce risks.</p> <p>c. Lack of councillors to effectively carry out the functions and business of the Council.</p>	<p>Attendance at training and refresher training. Identification of risks and need for clear objectives and policies.</p> <p>Risk assessing to be considered at the four annual Finance Committee meetings.</p> <p>Councillors working constructively and collaboratively within the Code of Conduct Informing North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) of resignations as soon as possible. Actively working to fill vacancies as soon as possible by co-option.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk and RFO</p> <p>Clerk Councillors</p> <p>Clerk Councillors NKDC</p>
<p>3. Influence others To influence others, such as North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, and other government organisations in recognising the requirements of the residents and best ways to overcome any issues.</p>	<p>a. Lack of public consultation and communication with residents resulting in lack of evidence to inform other agencies of requirements.</p> <p>b. Lack of clear communication with other organisations.</p> <p>c. Lack of councillor confidence.</p>	<p>Effective sharing of information using a variety of methods to reach all the local population, including the noticeboard, social media, website, posters in public places (e.g. medical centre, Co-op, cafes), providing schools with information for sending home in school bags; holding an annual parish meeting and other public meetings and sharing information in periodic Parish Council newsletters, and the quarterly Signpost newsletter. Distributing questionnaires to gauge customer wants and needs Building positive networks with other organisations.</p> <p>Attending school assemblies and holding surgeries to raise the profile of the Council and promote the raising of issues and sharing of ideas. Collaborate working on projects.</p> <p>Training encouraged for all council members. Induction of councillors by Clerk and experienced councillors. Induction handbook. Mentoring of new councillors by more experienced members.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk Deputy Clerk &RFO.</p> <p>All Councillors Clerk RFO</p> <p>Chairman Clerk All Councillors</p>

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<p>4. Councillor Responsibilities and Insurance All councillors are aware of their responsibilities, of any possible liabilities, and the council provides adequate insurance cover for all likely risks.</p>	<p>a. Lack of Councillor, Clerk and RFO knowledge.</p> <p>b. Insurance lapsed.</p> <p>c. Inadequate insurance cover.</p> <p>d. Failure of councillors to declare interests and take part / vote on inappropriate matters, causing a negative public perception of the Council by the public.</p>	<p>Induction and training. Membership of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) for advice and training, including risk management and insurance.</p> <p>Employers and Public Liability insurance are mandatory and renewed annually or every 3 years – depending on the term of cover purchased.</p> <p>Clerk and RFO share a calendar with all important dates - including insurance renewal (1 June); parish vehicle insurance (9 June).</p> <p>The Finance Committee review the insurance and quotes for cover annually.</p> <p>Clerk informs the insurance company of any changes with immediate effect, such as purchase of new equipment, staff reaching a certain age, and asks for clarity if insure.</p> <p>Declarations of interest an item on all agendas, with the reminder that a declaration can be made at any time during the meeting when this becomes apparent.</p> <p>Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Management Scheme, and Code of Conduct reviewed and approved annually.</p> <p>Attendance at Code of Conduct Training mandatory for all new councillors.</p> <p>Councillors ensure their DPI forms are up to date and returned to the Monitoring Officer within the set time frame.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk All councillors</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk All Councillors</p> <p>Chairman# Clerk All Councillors</p> <p>Clerk All Councillors</p> <p>All councillors</p>

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<p>5. Accurate financial records To keep appropriate, accurate and contemporary accounts and financial records including the Annual Return.</p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge of accounting procedures.</p> <p>b. Lack of familiarity with the accounting software.</p> <p>c. Lack of knowledge of the Annual Return process.</p> <p>d. Annual Return not completed correctly or within the required timeframe.</p> <p>e. RFO taken ill or leaves without replacement.</p>	<p>All councillors, RFO and Clerk encouraged to attend financial and risk management training. All council and committee meetings to include budget and expenditure information, provided by the RFO. Undertake annual review of Standing Order and Financial Regulations and refer to these documents for clarity.</p> <p>Use of appropriate accounting, wages, tax, and pension software. Publishing financial information on the website as required.</p> <p>Induction and training for the RFO/Clerk and Councillors. Seek advice from LALC or the internal auditor.</p> <p>Following prescribed guidelines and meeting deadlines as published by the external auditor. Holding a meeting to approve the accounts and for the chairman and Clerk to sign the correct Annual Return sections and pages.</p> <p>Clerk familiar with the accounting systems and processes. Insurance cover in place to cover the cost of an RFO to cover until an RFO can be recruited and is in place. Advice can be obtained from the members of the Finance Committee and internal auditor if required.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk RFO All Councillors</p> <p>Clerk RFO Chairman</p> <p>Clerk RFO Chairman</p> <p>Clerk Finance Committee</p>

<p>6. Facilities and equipment</p> <p><i>These are purchased on an evidence basis, are well-maintained and fit for purpose and ensure value for money.</i></p> <p><i>Note: The purchase of low-value consumable and disposable equipment, or items not considered worthy of inclusion in the RPC 'Asset Register' would not normally require prior Public Consultation approval although all such expenditure will be included in published income and expenditure accounts</i></p>	<p>a. Purchasing equipment and facilities without public consultation, need or request.</p> <p>b. Funds used inappropriately or not providing value for money.</p> <p>c. Charges for facilities is inadequate or excessive.</p>	<p>Finding opportunities to gain the views of Ruskington residents of all ages and consult with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Including members of the public and representatives of village organisations as non-councillor members of committees and working parties to share expertise and explore ideas for projects.</p> <p>Publishing clear agendas and minutes to promote transparency and openness, making clear the opportunity for members of the public and press to attend the open forum at council and committee meetings to ask questions and raise any issues, or make suggestions. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations make clear the tendering and quote obtaining process. Clear instructions for the Council caretakers and other employees. Effective budget management and planning projects for the following financial year, based on research and findings of need.</p> <p>Carry out research to find fair charges and fees. Effective financial management and internal checks.</p>	<p>Clerk Chairman Finance Committee All councillors</p> <p>Clerk Chairman Finance Committee All councillors</p> <p>Clerk RFO Finance Committee</p> <p>Clerk / RFO Clerk / RFO All councillors</p>
<p>7. Grants and donations</p> <p>These are fair, met the guidelines and deadline and benefit r/ make life better for residents of the village and / or the environment.</p>	<p>a. Excessive or inadequate grant awarded.</p> <p>b. Inappropriate requests for funding.</p> <p>c. Award goes to an individual not a group.</p>	<p>Clear grant policy and guidelines containing the limit of the grant to be awarded.</p> <p>Clear grant policy stating eligibility, what the grant will be used for and who will benefit.</p> <p>Evidence of a constituted group with rules and a bank account with two signatories is supplied with the application form and made clear in the grant policy / application form. Reviews of the applications with request for further information to be supplied of required.</p>	<p>Clerk Chairman Finance Committee</p> <p>Clerk Clerk Finance Committee All councillors</p>

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<p>8. Annual Precept</p> <p>The precept requirement is based on an adequate budgetary process, is monitored and reserves are used appropriately.</p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge of the budgetary process, and Council regulations.</p> <p>b. Excessive or inadequate precept set.</p> <p>c. Reserves too high or too low.</p>	<p>Latest regulations provided for all Councillors.</p> <p>From August of each year, committees start to plan projects and maintenance programmes for the following financial year. Finance Committee review ideas, projects and begin the budgeting process for the following financial year. Recommendations are approved at the full council meeting in December or January. The budget and precept are approved at the January meeting.</p> <p>It is recognised 'Best Practice' that the General Reserve (not Earmarked Reserve) should be 25% of typical annual income: however, this figure may be temporarily reduced to meet short term financial requirements subject to the following: the completion of a specific Risk Assessment; the recommendation by the Finance Committee; the agreement of the RFO and/or the Internal auditor; and Resolution by the Full Council. The general reserve not to exceed 75% of typical annual income, or otherwise as directed by the RFO / Internal Auditor.</p>	<p>Clerk Chairman All Councillors</p> <p>All Councillors Clerk RFO</p> <p>RFO All Councillors</p>
<p>9. Income</p> <p>To explore all possible sources of income and ensure that expected income is fully received.</p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge or willingness to complete funding applications.</p> <p>b. Inappropriate rental income.</p> <p>c. Receipts not banked promptly.</p> <p>d. Debts not pursued.</p> <p>e. VAT claims not made or made incorrectly.</p>	<p>Attend funding training, workshops, and networking events to discover sources of funding and gain experience in completing applications. Ensure the funding criteria and deadlines are met.</p> <p>Charge appropriate rates. Advertise facilities and ensure they are well maintained, safe and attractive to encourage their use.</p> <p>Regular checks by RFO and Councillors. Internal audit checks.</p> <p>Regular checks by RFO and Councillors. Internal audit checks.</p> <p>Ensure RFO has current VAT publications. Regular internal audit checks.</p>	<p>Chairman Clerk RFO All Councillors Finance Committee RFO All Councillors</p> <p>RFO All Councillors</p> <p>Clerk RFO All Councillors</p>

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<p>10. Salaries and payments</p> <p>To ensure staff are paid on time, and contractors are paid in accordance with Council regulations, budget, and statutory legislation.</p>	<p>a. Inappropriate rate of pay for staff.</p> <p>b. Tax, NI, and pension payments not in accordance with regulations.</p>	<p>Use the latest pay scales published by the National Joint Council to determine the salaries of the Clerk /RFO and as guidance for all other RPC directly employed staff</p> <p>Clerk and RFO checks. Internal audit checks. Issue of pay slips with NI and pension contributions. Use of HMRC PAYE software and NEST pension software.</p>	<p>Clerk RFO Finance Committee All councillors</p> <p>RFO Clerk Finance Committee</p>
<p>11. Asset register</p> <p>To identify, value and maintain all the assets of Ruskington Parish Council, and ensure that asset and investment registers are complete, accurate and properly maintained.</p>	<p>a. Lack of knowledge of the Council's assets.</p> <p>b. Assets lost or misappropriated</p> <p>c. Inadequate or inaccurate valuation of the assets</p> <p>d. Asset register not maintained adequately.</p>	<p>Ascertain and record all assets for which the Council, is responsible. Create and maintain a permanent asset register.</p> <p>Appoint person responsible for the security and maintenance of each asset and regularly monitor its location by conducting physical inspections.</p> <p>Review and seek professional valuation as required. Internal audit checks.</p> <p>Regular review and update in compliance with Audit Commission regulations. Disposal of assets to be approved by the Council and minuted.</p>	<p>Clerk / RFO Finance Committee</p> <p>Clerk RFO</p> <p>Clerk / RFO Finance Committee</p> <p>Clerk / RFO Finance Committee All Councillors</p>
<p>12. Equality and equal opportunities</p> <p>To comply with appropriate Government legislation regarding disability, racial equality, safeguarding children etc.</p>	<p>1. Lack of knowledge of applicable legislation</p> <p>2. Lack of public awareness of applicable legislation.</p> <p>3. Failure to comply with applicable legislation.</p>	<p>Clerk to have all appropriate and current legislation available and access to training as required. Review liabilities and responsibilities periodically at Council meetings. Annual review and adoption of the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults' policy.</p> <p>Include, as appropriate, in any public consultations.</p> <p>Clerk to have all appropriate legislation available.</p>	<p>Clerk Chairman All councillors</p> <p>Clerk All councillors</p> <p>Clerk Chairman All councillors</p>

		Review liabilities and responsibilities periodically at PC meetings.	
<p>13. Buildings and Property</p> <p>To carry out adequate safety checks on all buildings and properties for which the Council is responsible.</p> <p><i>Parish Office</i> <i>Parkfield Pavilion</i> <i>Parkfield changing rooms</i> <i>Church Street public toilets</i> <i>Play areas and playing field</i> <i>Cemetery</i> <i>Garden of Remembrance</i> <i>Horseshoe Hollow</i></p>	<p>1. Lack of information on properties, buildings, and equipment.</p> <p>2. Lack of knowledge of safety requirements.</p> <p>3. Lack of commitment to carrying out safety checks.</p>	<p>Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by the Clerk. Include in asset register all properties for which PC responsible.</p> <p>Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by Clerk. Place subject as item on PC meeting agenda at regular intervals.</p> <p>Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by Clerk. Place subject as item on PC meeting agenda at regular intervals. Delegate responsibility for supervision of particular properties to individual councillors, reporting back to council for any action.</p>	<p>Clerk RFO</p> <p>Clerk All councillors</p> <p>Clerk Chairman Finance Committee Delegated Councillors</p>