

## **Nash Parish Council 2017-18**

### **Risk Assessment - general**

**Background:** In 2012 the external auditors commented that “*The Council should ensure that the risk assessment covers all risks (both financial and operational). Please refer to the Practitioners’ Guide for advice.*” This paper is intended to identify the risks that NPC could face, their likelihood and impact and possible means of minimising their effect.

**Extracts from the Practitioners’ Guide:** The following extracts give some guidance about what the auditor would expect to find in NPC’s Risk Assessment of its activities.

*Risk Assessment:* The greatest risk facing a local authority is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected of the council. The council is likely to be managing many of those risks when it reviews its insurance and its systems. The minutes are an essential record of such reviews. Budget setting and insurance review are annual activities; the review of systems may be less frequent. It is suggested that systems should be reviewed in some detail, unless triggered by external or internal audit reports, or change in risk, at least every four years or on the change of Parish Clerk/RFO. Minutes should be checked by internal audit for any suggestion of unusual activity and evidence that risks are being identified and managed.

*Risk management* is the process whereby local councils methodically address the risk associated with what they do and the services which they provide. The focus of good risk management is to identify what can go wrong and take proportionate steps to avoid this or successfully manage the consequences.

Risk management is not just about financial management; it is about ensuring the achievement of objectives set by the council to deliver high quality public services. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation, the ability to achieve desired targets, and, eventually, on the local community’s Council Tax bills.

Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risks threaten the achievement of policy objectives. As a minimum, at least once each year members should:

- take steps to identify and update their record of key risks facing the council;
- evaluate the potential consequences to the council if an event identified as a risk takes place;
- decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences; and
- record any conclusions or decisions reached.

### ***Responsibilities of Nash Parish Council***

The responsibilities of NPC can be summarised under the following broad headings:

#### *Maintenance of Assets*

Nash Recreation Ground (including the Play Area and Play Equipment)

Nash Village Pond and Nash Village Green

Nash Street Lighting

Various Street Furniture assets (Notice Boards, Seats, Village Sign, Water pumps, Bus Shelter)

Office Furniture (one filing cabinet)

Laptop and printer. Maintaining security of documents and internet security.

NPC arranges for the recreation ground and village green to be cut on a regular basis by a contractor. The contractor is required to have Public and Employers' insurance liability cover of £5million.

#### *Grass cutting of Buckinghamshire County Council's verges, footpaths and green and other responsibilities*

NPC entered into an arrangement with BCC whereby NPC will be responsible for the services formerly provided by BCC as set out in the First Schedule (BCC services). These consist primarily (but not exclusively to) the cutting of the grass along the verges, footpaths and green and as identified on plans provided by BCC. The agreement is for a period of 3 years from 1 April 2016.

#### *Liaison with other Councils and Bodies*

NPC comments on Planning Applications in Nash and, where appropriate, on applications and matters on land close to Nash which affects Nash residents. (AVDC)

NPC reports highway matters to BCC and seeking improvements where practicable and affordable. This includes matters relating to footpaths and rights of way. (BCC)

NPC responds to consultations whether from AVDC, BCC, government departments or other statutory or non-governmental bodies.

NPC sends one or more representatives to relevant discussion/briefing meetings organised by other bodies, mainly AVDC/BCC.

#### *Finance*

The Council has to manage its finances in accordance with good practice (noting that it has a single part-time employee and no regular cash income or expenditure.)

#### *General*

NPC will discuss any matter of general concern to Nash residents and take appropriate action, normally referring matters to other bodies or making representations to other bodies on behalf of Nash residents. Where appropriate, NPC calls public meetings, in addition to the annual parish meeting to brief residents and/or obtain their views.

NPC communicates with Nash residents through the Village newsletter (organised by the All Saints' Church), notices on the notice board by the Village Hall and displaying the Agendas and Minutes of Meetings on the Village web-site. On matters of substantial importance NPC will leaflet all houses in the village.

#### ***Risk management by NPC***

*Insurance:* NPC reviews its insurance schedule at its March meeting so that it can negotiate any changes in good time before its renewal on 1 June. This includes a review of the asset register, the insurance value of which is increased annually by an appropriate inflation factor.

*Specific Activities:* NPC prepares a specific risk assessment for any activity that it organises. (Currently the annual litter pick and the maintenance of the Mvas and as set out in the Second Schedule).

*Recreation Ground:* Two Councillors take the lead for ensuring that any maintenance work required in the Recreation Ground/Play Area is identified during the year. In addition, NPC arranges for an annual report on the Recreation Ground and the play equipment in the Play Area. The recommendations from that report are reviewed by the lead Councillor and reported to the next meeting of the Council where the decisions on the actions required are recorded in the minutes.

*Village Pond and Village Green:* One councillor living in sight of these report problems.

*Street Lighting:* NPC has a maintenance contract with EON to maintain its street lights.

*Street Furniture:* Rely on problems being reported by residents/dog walkers and periodic inspections by the Parish Clerk.

*Grass cutting of the Recreation Ground and Village Green:* This work is carried out by a contractor who is required to maintain Public and Employers' liability insurance for a minimum of £5m. The work is periodically checked by the Parish Clerk.

*Council Business:* The routine work of the Council in terms of correspondence, preparation of agendas and minutes is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate. Significant risks arise in continuity of business when the Chairman or the Parish Clerk resigns. In addition, other risks arise as follows:

- Illness/absence of the Parish Clerk: *ad hoc arrangements depending on length of absence*
- Illness/absence of the Chairman: *Vice-Chairman, if any, or senior Cllr deputises.*
- Malfunctioning of the Parish Clerk's PC or printer, or loss of internet service/telephone service in the village. *(Use equipment elsewhere in the village/mobile phone, ensure that PC work is regularly backed-up, use of appropriate anti-virus and malware software.)*
- Identifying the external meetings where it is important to be represented and having some-one free to attend.
- The effectiveness of the Council's liaison role is dependent on the timeliness and quality of the response of the other body, mainly AVDC and BCC.

*Working conditions of the Parish Clerk:*

- NPC has no offices and so the Parish Clerk works from home. The Parish Clerk has responsibility to ensure that the office layout does not cause any health and safety issues. The Parish Clerk has confirmed to NPC that this is the Parish Clerk's responsibility unless and until the Parish Clerk notifies NPC of a health or safety issue which NPC does not resolve. The Parish Clerk may receive visitors on Parish Council business and so there must be some risk (however minimal) to the Parish Clerk's safety if he/she is alone in the house when receiving Parish Council visitors.
- The official address for NPC is Nash Village Hall. NPC shares a post-box for mail with the Village Hall and another user of the Village Hall. This does run the risk that mail addressed to NPC could be intercepted by a third party.
- NPC has four notice-boards. The one by the Village Hall is the 'official' notice-board on which are displayed formal Parish Council notices such as agendas and planning and other notices. As all notice boards are outside, this task can be dangerous in strong winds (and if conditions underfoot are icy). *(Delay posting Notices.)*

- The job requirement averages about seven hours a week, but there are peaks and troughs with peaks around Parish Council meetings, major planning applications and the financial year-end in March. The Parish Clerk's hours of work are reviewed annually in January. If any matter requires urgent action, it cannot be assumed that the Parish Clerk will be available to deal with it there and then. (*Chairman or other councillor deputises*)

### *BCC services*

NPC delegates the cutting of grass to a contractor who is required to comply with BCC's requirements for such grass cutting and to have Public and Employers' liability of £10m. Under the agreement between NPC and the Contractor, the Contractor is required to comply with BCC's risk assessments and method statements in respect of the work that they carry out. The work carried out by the Contractor is monitored by the Parish Clerk periodically. In respect of the remainder of the BCC services this will be delegated by NPC to a contractor as and when NPC considers such work is necessary.

In managing risk relating to the delivery of the BCC services NPC will seek to ensure that it:

- Identifies and records hazards and risks appropriately, with a clear focus on a manageable and stable balance between risk and control.
- Identifies who might be harmed by an activity and how, and the chance/probability/risk of it happening.
- Puts in place appropriate actions for reducing or, where possible, eliminating the risk.
- Monitors and records service delivery on an ongoing basis, logging issues, concerns or events.
- Carries out systematic and thorough reviews and annual evaluations of the hazards and risks, including their significance and any changes required.
- Uses monitoring and evaluation to make appropriate changes to service delivery and implementing the changes promptly.
- Provides clear and accessible ways for the community to provide feedback about service delivery and to raise any concerns.
- Makes risk management an integral part of the work of NPC and ensures that it does not become solely the responsibility of one person.

**Finance:** The following financial regulations/procedures shall be followed:

- 1 All payments shall be made by cheque unless there are exceptional circumstances. All receipts should be by bank transfer or cheque unless there are special circumstances.
- 2 All cheques shall require two signatures. The authorised signatories shall be the Chairman, the Responsible Financial Officer/Parish Clerk, and two councillors. The Parish Clerk is not authorised by NPC to counter-sign cheques made payable to the Parish Clerk or any cheques in excess of £1,000, where in each case the cheque signatories should be two councillors.
- 3 All receipts and payments shall be authorised by NPC and reported at a meeting of the Council. For major contracts, the RFO should seek to obtain three quotations for consideration at a meeting or under authority delegated at a meeting to the Chairman, RFO and at least one other councillor. Regular contracts, such as grass cutting, should be annual contracts or longer.
- 4 At each ordinary meeting the Council will receive a report on the current balances on its accounts. The RFO will report any significant divergence from the budget.

- 5 At its November or January meeting the Council will discuss its budget and precept for the following fiscal year.
- 6 A bank statement will be obtained for the Council's current account on a regular monthly basis. The Responsible Financial Officer will reconcile the balance shown in the statement with the cash book record. Balances on the General Reserve and the Recreation Ground Reserve will also be reconciled monthly. The Chairman and the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer will sign the cash book record at the end of each financial year.
- 7 The Council will meet statutory requirements in respect of PAYE. It will reclaim VAT where possible.
- 8 The Council will arrange for an internal audit at least once a year to review whether the systems of financial and other controls are effective. The internal audit function will be sufficiently independent of the council and the person or persons carrying out internal audit will be competent to carry out the role.
- 9 The guidance given in the 2010 Practitioner's Guide for Local Councils (and any subsequent amendments) will be followed.

## FIRST SCHEDULE

Devolved Activity	Service & Description	Minimum Standard	Health and Safety	Conditions and Restrictions	Current Standards and Frequencies
Urban Grass Cutting	Urban Grass Cutting - Cutting of urban grass verges, as defined on the Local Council Overview Map provided.	Information on traffic signs is legible to oncoming road users. Cuttings must be left to mulch on the road side, disposed of commercially or composted in the community. They must not be taken to the local household recycling site.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used. Correct type of grass cutting equipment used for different environments (steep verges, etc). A risk assessment must be carried out. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	Staff undertaking work should be competent, familiar with the Red Book and the Code of Practice, and also adhere to Health & Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.	Grass should be cut as frequently as necessary so as not to restrict visibility. Arisings should be kept away from road and pavement areas. Activity is frequency based, generally performed 6 times per year between March and October.
Hedging	Hedge cutting - Cutting hedges/trees/shrubs which are a danger to road users/ pedestrians. Frontagers/ landowners must be identified/ found in the first instance and issued hedge cutting notices (see Serving Hedge Cutting Notices below). If they still cannot be found or they have not cut the hedge (and it is still causing obstruction and/or danger to public highway), cut the hedge/tree/shrub.	Information on traffic signs is legible to oncoming road users. Visual splays are clear.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used when working on/near carriageways. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	Staff undertaking work should be competent, familiar with the Red Book and the Code of Practice, and also adhere to Health and Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.	No specific standards although hedges are usually be trimmed to A-shape, which promotes healthy growth. Activity is reactive, performed as required throughout the year, but with a general proviso to avoid the nesting season (April – August).
	Serving of hedge cutting notices - Send requests (Templates 1 and 2) to frontagers/landowners to deal with hedges, trees or shrubs that are causing an obstruction and/or danger to the public highway. If no co-operation, refer to BCC Legal to issue Enforcement Notice and on expiry, cut hedge/ tree/shrub.	Information on traffic signs is legible to oncoming road users. Visual displays are clear. Footways and RoW are accessible to pedestrians; and bridleways to pedestrians and horses.	N/A	Administered in accordance with the procedures attached (in Appendix B) but not including instigating legal proceedings.	Follow process as detailed in Hedge cutting Process Flow document. Activity is reactive, performed as required throughout the year, but with a general proviso to avoid the nesting season (April – August).

Devolved Activity	Service & Description	Minimum Standard	Health and Safety	Conditions and Restrictions	Current Standards and Frequencies
Siding Out	Siding out of overgrown footways - Preventing the encroachment of verge soil and growth onto the footway. This is essential if overgrown footways are obscuring visual splays.	Access for all pedestrian users is maintained along the footpath.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used when working on/near carriageways. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	Staff undertaking work should be competent and also adhere to Health & Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.	No specific standards. Maintain clear sight to mandatory traffic signs. Activity is reactive, performed as required throughout the year.
	Trimming vegetation obstructing footways (or liaising with landowner to carry out where appropriate) - Where vegetation is obstructing footway this should be removed to ensure pedestrians can navigate the route.	Footways must be removed of all obstructions. Footways are accessible to pedestrians. Encroaching grass must be cut out of footways. Where landowners are involved they must be made aware of their obligations and prompted to clear footways.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used when working on/near carriageways. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	Staff undertaking work should be competent and also adhere to Health & Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.	No specific standard. Maintain clear sight to mandatory traffic signs. Activity is reactive, performed as required throughout the year.
Rights of Way	Rights of Way clearance - As per the provided Annual Clearance Portfolio Map. Includes paths listed on BCCs annual clearance schedule (bridleways, footpaths, byways and restricted byways). Clearance means surface mowing on the public rights of way network up to the local council boundary where landowners have not carried this out. The landowner is responsible for ensuring hedges and trees are safe and if they fall across the public right of way they are removed. They also have responsibility for cutting hedge growth across a right of way.	Rights of way are accessible for pedestrians.  Legal minimum width is 1.5meters for a public footpath and 3meters for a public bridleway.  Right to demand that an obstruction is removed and to recover costs of removal. Clearance does not include hedge cutting, clearing of side growths or cutting down trees.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used. Correct type of equipment used for different environments (steep verges etc). A risk assessment must be carried out. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed.	Staff undertaking work should be competent, familiar with the Red Book and the Code of Practice, and also adhere to Health & Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.  Clearance of natural vegetation applies. Where clearance of arable crops is required, this is the sole duty and responsibility of the landowner to remove.	No specific standard. RoW should be maintained so as to ensure clear access and remove safety concerns. Activity is reactive and is performed as required throughout the year. Hedge trimming should avoid the nesting season (between April and August).

Devolved Activity	Service & Description	Minimum Standard	Health and Safety	Conditions and Restrictions	Current Standards and Frequencies
Weed Killing	Weed control of noxious and injurious types on footways - Control the spread of weeds which can damage habits and agricultural land. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common ragwort</li> <li>• Creeping thistle</li> <li>• Field thistle</li> <li>• Spear thistle</li> <li>• Curled and broad-leaved dock.</li> </ul>	To maintain green cover and protect habitats. Do not apply herbicide within two metres of the centre of a hedgerow, watercourse or field ditch, or within one metre of the top of the bank of a watercourse or field ditch.	Specific training in safe use of chemicals. The employer is responsible for providing all PPE stated on the herbicide's label. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	Staff undertaking work should be LANTRA (or equivalent) accredited, trained and also adhere to Health and Safety requirements in terms of risk assessments and PPE.	There is no absolute requirement to eradicate weeds, but to control and reduce spread where possible. Injurious weeds in locations of public access should be eradicated. Activity is reactive, dependent upon identification of weed growth and method of control, carried out during the growing season (generally March to October).
Maintenance	Maintenance of BCC street furniture including minor repair or repainting - Maintaining street furniture (defined as above street-level, objects on and at rear of footways), such as sign-posts, signs, seating, cycle racks, decorative bollards and village gateway features.	Inspect street furniture and undertake minor repairs (e.g. replace loose clips, tightening nuts/bolts, remove graffiti and cleaning) or repainting, using approved items. Report major damage or vandalism to local LAT.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used when working on/near carriageways. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	EXCLUDES any items with electrical feed (i.e. lit), e.g. street lights, lighting columns, lit signs and lit bollards.  Limited to BCC street furniture erected within the public highway (defined as above street-level, objects on and at rear of footways).	Unless activity is non-technical, seek advice from local LAT on standard required, specification/colour of paint and approved materials list. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.
	Minor repairs to traffic sign - Such as tightening of brackets where a sign has slipped. Signs that are badly damaged (e.g. bent, buckled) must be reported to TfB for repair.	Information on Hazard and Speed limit signs must be clearly visible and legible to oncoming road users.			Use sign clips and materials supplied through local depot where possible. Consult local LAT if in doubt. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.
	Cleaning of traffic signs - Information on Hazard and Speed limit signs must be legible to oncoming motorists.	Signs must be clearly visible. It is advised that they are cleaned with cold soapy water and a brush.			Use sign clips and materials supplied through local depot where possible. Consult local LAT if in doubt. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.



Devolved Activity	Service & Description	Minimum Standard	Health and Safety	Conditions and Restrictions	Current Standards and Frequencies
Maintenance	Removal of fly posters and other illegal signs - Fly posters and signs which are illegally erected must be removed to ensure the general tidiness and maintenance of the network. This becomes essential if they obscure signs.	Limited to those erected within the public highway or attached to street furniture. Procedure outlined in Appendix C.		Limited to those erected in the public highway or attached to street furniture in accordance with procedure attached at Appendix C.	No specific standards exist. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.
	Checking for obstructions to footways - Check that footways are clear of obstructions, such as scaffolding and debris, and arrange for removal. A vehicle blocking a vehicular access or footway should be reported to the local police, as they have sole enforcement powers.	Footways are accessible for pedestrians.	Personal Protective equipment (PPE) is worn/used when working on/near carriageways. Legislation relating to safe working on/near carriageways must be observed. When using specialist equipment staff must be properly trained.	N/A	No specific standard exists. Footpaths should where practicable remain clear for pedestrian usage over their entire width (usually 1.2m width minimum). Safety must be maintained at all times. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.
	Approval of charity event advertising signage - Charity event advertising signage may be put up, however, this must be approved by the local council and is deemed illegal if put up without approval.	Limited to the locations listed and administered in accordance with procedure outlined in Appendix A.	N/A	Limited to locations listed and administered in accordance with procedure attached at Appendix A.	No particular standards exist. However, signing must be legible, easily read by motorist, safely positioned so as not to cause distraction or hindrance and securely fastened in place. No sign of greater than 0.3m x 0.3m should be fastened to any form of existing sign pole. Activity is reactive, carried out on a prioritised basis throughout the year.

## SECOND SCHEDULE

### Mvas maintenance: Risk Assessment – specific

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Precautions</b>
At risk from passing cars when accessing data or changing battery	Medium	Wear high visibility jackets; work in pairs so that one person acts as look out for passing cars.
Movement of Mvas and post to another location.	Medium	Wear high visibility jackets; work in threes or more so that one person acts as look out for passing cars and the other two move the Mvas and post.
A car will be required to move the post and Mvas.	Medium	Parking of the user's car near the Mvas existing location and new location so as to access it but at the same time parked in a location so that it is not a danger to traffic. Care to be taken to avoid damage to user's car in moving the Mvas. Maintenance of awareness of passing traffic.
Damage to Mvas in moving it.	Low	Care to be taken in moving Mvas.
Battery being overcharged	Low	Ensure that when charging the battery this is charged no longer than the recommended maximum charging time.
Corruption of data on the Mvas	Low	Regularly check data to ensure that it is working correctly.

### Litter Pick: Risk Assessment - specific

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Precautions</b>
Bad Weather	Medium	Cancel/postpone if weather too inclement
Accidents to participants	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All participants to wear appropriate clothing including stout shoes, thick gloves etc</li><li>2. All participants to wear safety vests</li><li>3. All participants to work in pairs</li><li>4. Each pair of participants to have an implement (litter picker/rake) to extract litter from hedgerows.</li><li>5. All children to be under the supervision of their parents</li><li>6. All participants told not to lift large items that are too heavy or too awkwardly placed but to report them to the organiser.</li><li>7. First Aid kit to be available in Village Hall</li><li>8. Organiser to carry mobile phone in case of emergency</li></ol>
Too few volunteers for work involved	Low	Organiser to scale back area of litter pick to priority areas
Grass so long that it is harder to see and extract litter	Medium	Volunteers to be told to do the best they can without putting themselves at risk.

