

Nash Parish Council

Risk Assessment - general 2019

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 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.

Maintenance of Assets on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council

The Parish Council is responsible under delegated authority for cutting the grass in the village which belongs to BCC.

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 three Notice Boards 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.)

Recreation Ground: One Councillor takes 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 minuted.

There is a litter bin in the Play Area which is checked and if need be emptied by a Councillor every week from May to September and at least every month from October to April. In each month the Councillor responsible for emptying the bin is asked to carry out an inspection of the playground, noting any defects or remedial works required and to send his/her report to the Clerk.

Grass cutting: The Parish Council will employ reputable contractors to carry out the work and who have public liability insurance cover of at least £5m for the areas owned by the Parish Council and at least £10m for the areas owned by BCC.

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 Clerk.

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

- *Illness/absence of the 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 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 Clerk:

- *NPC has no offices and so the Clerk works from home. The clerk has responsibility to ensure that their office layout is appropriate in respect of health and safety. The Clerk may receive visitors on Parish Council business and so there must be some risk (however minimal) to the Clerk's safety if he/she is alone in the house when receiving Parish Council visitors.*
- *NPC has three Notice-Boards (there is a fourth by the allotments in Whaddon Road but in view of its run-down condition it is no longer used for displaying Parish Council notices). Two are used for general information and 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 six 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. Also, if anything requires urgent action, it cannot be assumed that the Clerk will be available to deal with it there and then. (Chairman or other councillor deputises)*

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

- 1 All payments shall be made by electronic transfer or cheque unless there are exceptional circumstances. All receipts should be by bank transfer or cheque unless there are special circumstances.
- 2 If a bank transfer is under £100 then this may be authorised by the Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk. For payments above £100 then the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (or in

their absence another Councillor(s)). This will be authorised by an exchange of emails; the Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk will keep for one year copies of such emails and will mark on the invoice the initials of those Councillors authorising the transaction.

- 3 All cheques shall require two signatures. The authorised signatories shall be the Chairman, the Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk, and two councillors. The Clerk is not authorised by the Parish Council to counter-sign cheques made payable to the Clerk or any cheques in excess of £1,000, where in each case the cheque signatories should be two councillors.
- 4 All receipts and payments shall be authorised by the Parish Council 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 At its November or January meeting the Council will discuss its budget and precept for the following fiscal year.
- 7 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 Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer will sign the cash book record at the end of each financial year.
- 8 The Council will meet statutory requirements in respect of PAYE. It will reclaim VAT where possible.
- 9 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.
- 10 The guidance given in the 2010 Practitioner's Guide for Local Councils (and any subsequent amendments) will be followed.

Nash Parish Council Mvas maintenance: Risk Assessment – specific

Risk	Severity	Precautions
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.

Nash Parish Council Litter Pick: Risk Assessment - specific

Risk	Severity	Precautions
Bad Weather	Medium	Cancel/postpone if weather too inclement
Accidents to participants	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out risk assessment and retain a copy. 2. Ensure that there are sufficient litter pickers, hi-vis jackets and rubbish bags. 3. Ensure all participants wear appropriate clothing including stout shoes, thick gloves etc 4. All participants to wear safety vests. 5. All participants to work in pairs. 6. Provide clear instructions as to areas to worked on and who is to go where. 7. Each pair of participants to have an implement (litter picker/rake) to extract litter from hedgerows. 8. All children to be under the supervision of their parents. 9. All participants told not to lift large items that are too heavy or too awkwardly placed but to report them to the organiser. 10. First Aid kit to be available in Village Hall 11. Organiser to carry mobile phone in case of emergency. 12. Ensure everyone is aware of where the rubbish should be left and that it is disposed of as soon as practicable. 13. A list of volunteers should be collated and collected.
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.

OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT TERMLY SAFETY CHECKLIST

Nash Recreation and Play GroundEquipment Inspected.....

DATE INSPECTED.....INSPECTED BY.....

SIGNATURE.....

ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT CHECKED	
1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

FEATURE	CHECK FOR	SATISFACTORY			COMMENTS / ACTIONS NEEDED
		Y	N	N/A	
STRUCTURE	Cracking, breaking, warping, loosening and bending				
SURFACE FINISH	Protective coating missing, rust, cracks, splinters				
CONSUMABLE ITEMS E.G. ROPES, CHAINS	Missing, bent, broken, loosened, worn, open hooks				
EDGES	Protrusions, sharp edges				
PINCH OR CRUSH POINTS	Exposed mechanisms, joints or moving components				
MOVING PARTS	Worn, lack of lubrication, seizure or excessive motion				
GUARDS / HAND RAILS / SWING BARRIERS	Missing, bent, broken, loosened				
ACCESS	Missing or broken rungs, steps or treads etc.				
SWING AND OTHER SEATS	Missing, damaged, loosened etc.				
IMPACT ABSORBING SURFACES	Ineffective by being compacted, displaced or not extensive enough to cover possible impact area				
FOUNDATIONS	Cracked, loose in ground exposed				
OTHER ITEMS SPECIFIC TO THE AREA					