

Risk Management/Assessment Strategy

Potterhanworth Parish Council

Approved and adopted by Council on 27-May-2025, minute ref: 6.c.

To be review annually in April.

Mission Statement of Potterhanworth Parish Council:

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

Potterhanworth 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
1. Legislation To ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Council's Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct. <i>Including:</i> <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>	a. Lack of knowledge of regulations and codes.	Councillor and staff induction and training. Ensure Councillors, clerk and RFO have access to the current and adopted regulations, policies, and procedures (website and paper copies) including the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, and issued with the Good Councillors Guide.	Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO NKDC (CoC only)
	b. Absence of Standing Orders.	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.	Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Lack of commitment to following regulations and procedures.	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.	Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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	d. Items purchased without approved tendering procedures – risk of accusation of commercial favouritism. e. Payments made without prior approval and adequate control.	Ensure all payments are approved in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders/Financial Regulations and recorded accurately. Signatories limited to the small number of Councillors. Prompt removal of bank signatories following resignation as a Councillor.	Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
2. Priorities and Risks To identify and regularly review the Council's priorities and risks.	a. Lack of knowledge and commitment by council members. b. No risk assessing carried out and no steps taken to reduce risks. c. Lack of Councillors to effectively carry out the functions and business of the Council.	Attendance at training and refresher training. Identification of risks and need for clear objectives and policies. Risk assessing to be considered quarterly. 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.	Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO Chair All Cllrs Clerk & RFO NKDC
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.	a. Lack of public consultation and communication with residents resulting in lack of evidence to inform other agencies of requirements.	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, providing school with information for sending home in school bags; holding an Annual Parish Meeting and other public meetings and sharing information via social media and website. Distributing questionnaires to gauge customer wants and needs and building positive networks with other organisations.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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3. Influence others continued.	b. Lack of clear communication with other organisations. c. Lack of councillor confidence.	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. Training encouraged for all council members. Induction of Councillors by Clerk and experienced Councillors. Induction handbook. Mentoring of new Councillors by more experienced members.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
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.	a. Lack of Councillor, Clerk and RFO knowledge. b. Insurance lapsed. c. Inadequate insurance cover.	Induction and training. Membership of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) for advice and training, including risk management and insurance. Employers and Public liability insurance are mandatory and renewed annually or every 3 years – depending on the term of cover purchased. Clerk and RFO share a calendar with all important dates - including insurance renewal (1 June). Council to review the insurance and quotes for cover annually. 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. 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. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Management Scheme, and Code of Conduct reviewed and approved annually. Attendance at Code of Conduct Training mandatory for all new Councillors	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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4. Councillor Responsibilities and Insurance continued.	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.	Councillors ensure their DPI forms are up to date and returned to the Monitoring Officer within the set time frame.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
5. Accurate financial records. To keep appropriate and accurate accounts and financial records including the Annual Return.	a. Lack of knowledge of accounting procedures.	All Councillors, Clerk/RFO encouraged to attend financial and risk management training. All council 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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	b. Lack of familiarity with the accounting software.	Use of appropriate accounting, wages, tax, and pension software. Publishing financial information on the website as required.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Lack of knowledge of the Annual Return process.	Induction and training for the Clerk/RFO and Councillors. Seek advice from LALC or the internal Auditor.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	d. Annual Return not completed correctly or within the required timeframe.	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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	e. RFO taken ill or leaves without replacement.	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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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6. Facilities and equipment. These are purchased on an evidence basis, are well maintained and fit for purpose and ensure value for money.	a. Purchasing equipment and facilities without public consultation, need or request.	Finding opportunities to gain the views of Potterhanworth 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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	b. Funds used inappropriately or not providing value for money.	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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Charges for facilities is inadequate or excessive.	Carry out research to find fair charges and fees. Effective financial management and internal checks	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
7. Grants and donations. These are fair, met the guidelines and deadline and benefit r/ make life better for residents of the village and / or the environment.	a. Excessive or inadequate grant awarded.	Clear grant policy and guidelines containing the limit of the grant to be awarded.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	b. Inappropriate requests for funding.	Clear grant policy stating eligibility, what the grant will be used for and who will benefit.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Award goes to an individual not a group if using s.137.	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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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8. Annual Precept. The precept requirement is based on an adequate budgetary process, is monitored and reserves are used appropriately.	a. Lack of knowledge of the budgetary process, and Council regulations.	Latest regulations provided for all Councillors.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	b. Excessive or inadequate precept set.	From October of each year, start to plan projects and maintenance programmes for the following financial year. Council to 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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Reserves too high or too low.	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 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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
9. Income. To explore all possible sources of income and ensure that expected income is fully received.	a. Lack of knowledge or willingness to complete funding applications.	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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	b. Inappropriate rental income.	Charge appropriate rates. Advertise facilities and ensure they are well maintained, safe and attractive to encourage their use.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	c. Receipts not banked promptly.	Regular checks by RFO and Councillors. Internal Audit checks.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	d. Debts not pursued.	Regular checks by RFO and Councillors. Internal Audit checks.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
	e. VAT claims not made or made incorrectly.	Ensure RFO has current VAT publications. Regular Internal Audit checks.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO

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10. Salaries and payments. To ensure staff are paid on time, and contractors are paid in accordance with Council regulations, budget, and statutory legislation.	a. Inappropriate rate of pay for staff. b. Tax, NI, and pension payments not in accordance with regulations.	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 directly employed staff. Clerk/RFO checks. Internal Audit checks. Issue of pay slips with NI and pension contributions. Use of an independent external Payroll Company for all Salary, HMRC PAYE and NEST pension calculations and payments.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
11. Asset Register To identify, value and maintain all the assets of the Council and ensure that asset registers are complete, accurate and properly maintained.	a. Lack of knowledge of the Council's assets. b. Assets lost or misappropriated. c. Inadequate or inaccurate valuation of the assets. d. Asset register not maintained adequately.	Ascertain and record all assets for which the Council, is responsible. Create and maintain a permanent asset register. Appoint person responsible for the security and maintenance of each asset and regularly monitor its location by conducting physical inspections. Review and seek professional valuation as required. Internal audit checks. Regular review and update in compliance with Audit Commission regulations. Disposal of assets to be approved by the Council and minuted.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO
12. Buildings and Property. To carry out adequate safety checks on all buildings and properties for which the Council is responsible. <i>Community Building</i> <i>Spring Lane Play Area</i> <i>Spring Lane Sport Field</i>	a. Lack of information on properties, buildings, and equipment. b. Lack of knowledge of safety requirements. c. Lack of commitment to carrying out safety checks.	Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by the Clerk. Include in asset register all properties for which PC responsible. Ensure that all current legislation and advice is held by Clerk. Place subject as item on PC meeting agenda at regular intervals. 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.	All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO All Cllrs Clerk & RFO