

Horton Parish Council

Risk Management Policy Statement and Risk Assessment

Horton Parish Council – Risk Management Policy Statement

Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

Risk Policy Statement

Horton Parish Council, hereafter referred to as HPC recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its Councillors, assets, liabilities and the community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise its opportunities.

HPC is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and we have tried to ensure we have a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.

Approach to Risk Management

HPC's approach to risk management is that we should try to identify and manage risks in the most cost effective manner within overall resources available.

Each risk identified by HPC is recorded in HPC's risk assessment document. The impact is assessed; control measures we feel to be appropriate are put in place together with the frequency with which the risk should be reviewed.

Responsibility for Risk Management

HPC recognises that it is the responsibility of all councillors and the clerk as an employee to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties. If uncontrolled, risk can result in a drain on resources that could better be directed to front line service provision and to the meeting of HPC's objectives and community needs.

This policy has the full support of HPC which recognises that any reduction in the risk of injury, illness, loss or damage benefits the whole community. From recent experience, we already know that Council responsibility cannot be taken lightly and areas like succession planning are critical.

The co-operation and commitment of all members of HPC and clerk as an employee is required to ensure that council resources are not wasted as a result of uncontrolled risk.

HPC is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.

Computerised Risk Management

HPC has considered the acquisition of Risk Management software for the control and reporting of risks. However, following recommendations from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships Communities Directorate, the decision was taken that rather than spend Parish funds, the relevant content should be included in the Risk Management Policy.

This Policy and Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar.

| FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE | | | | | |
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| Ref | Topic | Risk | H / M / L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
| 1 | Precept | Adequacy of precept | L | To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council receives monthly budget update information. The precept requirement is assessed at a budget meeting in January or earlier | Existing procedure adequate |
| 2 | | Requirements not submitted to RBWM Council | L | RBWM requests precept requirement providing a prompt for the Clerk. The precept request form is submitted by the Clerk in writing to the RBWM Council. Clerk keeps record of precept request. | Existing procedure adequate Clerk to minute the precept amount |
| 3 | | Precept not received | L | HPC is a 'low risk' authority, having low costs and some reserves. Precept receipt is monitored by Clerk who informs Council when the precept is received at the relevant meeting. | Existing procedure adequate |
| 4 | Budgeting | Budget not prepared for next financial year | L | With information on the previous budget and actual spend against budget heads, HPC maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings. Budget and precept setting are timetabled for meeting agenda annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar | Existing procedure adequate |
| 5 | Financial Records | Inadequate records | L | HPC has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. These Financial Regulations are reviewed annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar. HPC has proven record of seeking assistance from external auditor/accountant where appropriate. | Existing procedure adequate and will continue to seek external help as needed. |

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| 6 | | Financial irregularities/Internal controls | L | The accounts are audited by a qualified independent person each year. During the year financial reports are produced quarterly for parish council meetings by the Responsible Financial Officer/clerk. The people raising payments (RFO/Clerk) are not cheque signatories | Review the adequacy of internal audit and financial controls annually Quarterly reviews to be minuted and accounts sheet to be signed at meeting |
| 7 | Bank and Banking | Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges | L L L L | HPC has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, payments and reconciliation of accounts. Any bank errors are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statements arrive and any errors are dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. | Existing procedure adequate. Process in progress to add more signatories. Review the Financial Regulations and bank signatory list annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar and in the event of a change of clerk or any other extra ordinary change in circumstances, Monitor the bank statements monthly. Sub-committee to monitor quarterly, |
| 8 | Cash | Loss through theft or dishonesty | L | HPC has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Minimal cash received. There is no petty cash or float held by the Responsible Financial Officer/clerk. | Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations as necessary. |
| 9 | Reporting and Auditing | Information communication | L | A monitoring statement is produced quarterly before the appropriate Council meeting, and referred to all Cllrs for examination. It is then included on the agenda, discussed and approved at the meeting. This statement includes bank balance and budget concerns. Invoices are submitted monthly for approval for payments. In the event of receipts | Existing communication procedures adequate. Agendas circulated electronically; all Members encouraged to have Email. Paper copies are posted to those without. Mid-year internal audit check when demanded by the internal auditor |

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| | | | | other than precept from the borough they will be included in the agenda. | |
| 10 | All Costs & expenses Debts | Goods not supplied but billed | L | All goods to be ordered are confirmed at Council Meetings and checked by clerk who reports back. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| 11 | | Incorrect invoicing | L | Financial regulations set out requirement for Responsible Financial Officer checking for amounts against decisions/quotes etc. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| 12 | | Cheque payable incorrect | L | Councillors check invoice book against the cheque book and associated paperwork. Two signatories on cheques. Council approves the list of requests for payment | Existing procedure adequate. |
| 13 | | Loss of stock | L | HPC has no stock. | Review the Financial Regulations as necessary. |
| 14 | | Unpaid invoices | L | Council Invoices are minimal /rare. Unpaid invoices for Council goods or services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance. | Existing procedure adequate |
| 15 | Grants and support - payable | Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay | L | All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of budgeting, approval, is minuted and listed accordingly. <i>The Council has a Chairmans allowance paid on a receipt's basis. Where not paid directly by the council a reimbursement through the expense system would occur.</i> <i>A grant of £3,000pa was agreed to be paid to Champney Hall Management Committee (£2,000 for repairs and £1,000 towards insurance)</i> | In all cases, invoices or receipts will be submitted to HPC. |

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| 16 | Grants - receivable | Receipts of Grant | L | The Parish Council does not presently receive any regular grants apart from the annual precept and compensating grant. One-off grants would come with terms and conditions to be satisfied. | Financial Regulations and Standing Orders deal with authorisation for project expenditure and associated grant applications |
| 17 | Charges – rentals receivable | Receipt of rental | L | HPC does not receive direct rental payments | Existing procedure adequate. Review agreement and payable fees annually according to agreement. |
| 18 | | Insurance implication | M | Grantees arrange own insurance. HPC has insurance for fixtures and fittings (including play equipment), public liability and the flag pole. The PC insurers the play equipment and part of the insurance arrangement includes an annual inspection HPC is a trustee of Champney Hall | Responsible Financial Officer to ensure payment and copy of insurance document received. |
| 19 | Accountability | Work awarded incorrectly | L | HPC is mindful of its financial regulations which set out requirements for the award of contracts etc | Responsible Financial Officer and Members have a duty to implement Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. |
| 20 | | Overspend on services/depletion of reserves | M | Responsible Financial Officer to make recommendations on spending according to budget availability. | Members have a duty to consider budget and reserves requirements and operate within them (Financial Regulations sections 2 & 3). |
| 21 | Salaries and associated costs | Salary paid incorrectly, wrong rate paid, wrong deductions of NI or | L L L L | The Parish Council has one employee. Salary rates are assessed annually by the Joint National Council and any changes are implemented. The Clerk regularly reviews the spinal point using the NALC Role Evaluation sheet and will advise Councillors if this changes. The annual increase in | Existing appointment and payment systems for employees are adequate. |

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| | | Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue | | included in the budget setting and applied on 1 April each year (retrospectively if applicable). Salary analysis and slips are produced by external service 'MyController' monthly together with a schedule of payments to the Inland Revenue (for Tax and NI). The payments are approved at HPC meetings and signed off. The Tax and NI is worked by MyController and a calculation form is emailed each month. All Tax and NI payments are submitted to the Inland Revenue monthly in advance. The Clerk/RFO does not keep a time sheet and has a contract of employment and job description. | |
| 22 | Workplace pension | Lack of adequate provision | L | Clerk/RFO is a member of the Government's workplace pension scheme. | |
| 23 | Employees | Loss of key personnel/difficulty in retaining Clerk Not enough hours for role | M | Clerk post would be advertised widely, with arrangements to temporarily cover Clerk responsibilities until new Clerk in place | Improve council reputation by good conduct at meetings. Consider specialist training / intervention. Review Clerk's terms and conditions, contract of employment (especially hours) if requirements change |
| 24 | | Sudden/unexpected loss of key personnel | H | HPC have put measures in place to ensure that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have access to all Parish records including email passwords, bank accounts and historical records. In the event of sudden loss of key personnel, they would take personal responsibility for day-to-day affairs and immediately start a recruitment process for the replacement personnel. A 'Normal Operating Procedure' document exists including all regular | |

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| | | | | responsibilities and passwords. This document is password protected | |
| 25 | | Fraud by staff | L | No cash handled. 2 councillors sign cheques. Bank balances reported quarterly, statements available for inspection, checked and signed by two councillors. Fidelity Guarantee included in insurance (£250,000) | Existing procedure adequate. |
| 26 | | Actions undertaken by staff | L | The Responsible Financial Officer and Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. | Council membership of the BALC and will continue to attend local network meetings where possible. Monitor insurance as necessary. |
| 27 | Councillor allowances | Councillors over-paid | L | No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors | No procedure required |
| 28 | Election costs | Risk of an election cost | L | Known elections budgeted for through reserves. By-Elections to be provided from contingency budget | Councillors to monitor budget and reserves throughout the year to ensure adequate funding available if required. |
| 29 | VAT | Re-claiming/charging | L | HPC has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. VAT claimed at least every 6 months | Existing procedure adequate |
| 30 | Annual Return | Submit within time limits | L | Annual Return is completed and signed by HPC, submitted to an internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit. | |

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| 31 | Legal Powers | Illegal activity or payments | L | All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Parish Council Meetings. | Responsible Financial Officer and Members have a duty to implement Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. |
| 32 | Minutes / Agendas / Notices / Statutory Documents | Accuracy and legality | L | Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. | Existing procedure adequate. |
| 33 | | Business conduct | L | Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chairperson. | Guidance/training to Chairperson should be given (if required) – available per CALC. Members to adhere to Code of Conduct. |
| 34 | Members interests | Conflict of interest | L | The declaring of interests by members at a meeting reminds Councillors of their duty and should remain on the agenda. | Existing procedure adequate |
| 35 | | Register of Members interests | M | There are criminal penalties now deterring non-completion of Registers or declarations. | Members have a duty to update their individual Register of Interests. Clerk arranges for forms to be re-signed annually |
| 36 | Insurance | Adequacy | L | An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal in May) of all insurance arrangements in place. Risk assessments completed as required | Insurance policy adequate. Risk assessment in progress |
| 37 | | Cost | L | Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. Financial Regulations set out agreed process and requirements | Review insurance provision annually. |

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| 38 | Data protection | Policy Provision | M | Councillors to sign Data Protection Act 2018 agreement. Councillors and Clerk adhere to data protection principles and legislation | Data Protection Policy training for Clerk and Councillors to be provided as necessary |
| 39 | Freedom of Information Act | Policy Provision | M | HPC is open in its provision of information when requested | Model Publication Scheme updated February 2024 and Freedom of Information Act training for Clerk and Councillors provided where feasible. |

PHYSICAL RISKS INCLUDING ASSETS AND EQUIPMENT

| Ref | Topic | Risk | H/M/L | Management/control of risk | Review/Assess/Revise |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------|---|---|
| 1 | Assets | Loss or damage | L | Annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision. | Clerk to ensure current asset list is provided to insurers. Annual verification and inspection of all equipment carried out by clerk and at least one councillor |
| 2 | | Risk to third parties/property | L | Assets fully insured (£12m) Public Liability. Annual inspection of play equipment carried out and additional inspection, monthly, by nominated Parish Councillor. | Existing procedure adequate |
| 3 | Maintenance of assets | Poor performance of assets | L | All assets owned by the PC are reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned and authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. All assets are insured and reviewed annually. | All public amenities/land owned by HPC to be inspected monthly by nominated councillors who will provide a verbal report, noting any required actions required. Ensure inspections and actions carried out. |

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| 4 | Notice boards | Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety | L L | Notice board locations approval by relevant parties, insurance cover. Any repairs/maintenance requirements are brought to the attention of the Parish Council. | Boards to be inspected regularly by the Clerk. |
| 5 | Street furniture | Risk/damage/injury to third parties | L | The Parish Council is responsible for various items (i.e. seats, etc) around the parish and covered by insurance. No formalised programme of inspections is carried out but all reports of damage or faults are notified to HPC and/or dealt with. | Items should be inspected annually or upon report of disrepair/damage by Clerk or Councillors |
| 6 | Meeting location | Adequacy Health & Safety | L | The Parish Council Meetings are held at Horton Champney Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate by the Clerk as responsible officer for H&S. Meetings covered by insurance. | Existing locations adequate. Venue Public Liability to be checked from time to time |
| 7 | Council records – paper | Loss through: theft fire damage | L L L | The current Parish Council records are stored at the Clerks’ home address, and older ones in a secure archives file at Champney Hall. Records include correspondence, minute books and copies, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Copies of these are stored electronically in the Parish email records. | Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision adequate. |
| 8 | Council records - electronic | Loss through: Theft, fire, damage corruption of computer | LM | The Parish Council’s electronic records are stored on the Clerks’ computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals. The few paper originals received are scanned and emailed to the Clerk email, and created documents are emailed to Cllrs so all documents are available to the chair and vice chair as they have the email password | The clerk has provided the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the PC with details of passwords to access HPC email and electronic archive. |

| Horton Parish Council | | | |
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| Risk Management Policy Statement & Assessment | | | |
| Original Version created 2018 | Latest Review carried out by the Clerk to the Parish Council Jayne Kennedy March 2024 | Ratified 18 th March 2025 | To be revised March 2026 |