

Harwell Parish Council Risk Assessment

Approved: July 2020 Amended: Sep 2020, Nov 2020, Apr 2021

Parish Council Aims:

- To act in those areas for which we are responsible, for the benefit of the overall community while preserving & safeguarding the heritage and rural character of the Parish and the wider environment.
- To provide effective, efficient and accountable local government for the Parish, enabling residents to be involved in the life of the community and its future development.

Objectives:

- To set and manage the annual budget
- To hold regular Parish Council meetings and an Annual Parish Meeting which is open to the public.
- To manage and maintain Parish-owned land and property
- To publish a regular Parish newsletter to facilitate communications within the Parish
- To comply with GDPR regulations
- To represent the Parish's interests planning applications
- To operate safely and sustainably and in the best interests of the Parishioners, staff and Council members

Table of high-rated risks (see page 2):

Ref.	Rating	Risk	Additional action identified below.
F6	2/3/6	S106 and similar – loss of funds due to project change or time-limit.	-
ID5	2/3/6	Council in breach of GDPR regulations.	-
L4	2/3/6	Equipment shed damage, theft of or damage to equipment; damage to roof leading to loose asbestos and injury to staff.	-
L16	2/3/6	Covid-19	-

Table of Rating from impact and probability:

IMPACT	High	3	6	9
	Medium	2	4	6
	Low	1	2	3
		Low	Medium	High
	PROBABILITY			

Notes:

Ref categories are: BC - Business Continuity, F - Financial, ID - IT, internet and data storage, L - Lands and Buildings, CM - Conduct of meetings, LL – legal & litigation

Columns P, I and R are estimates of probability, impact and rating of risk.

Numbers in brackets in Subject column are the reference numbers for the risk in the previous document.

Original draft 6/2020 by M Ricketts *Additions in italics at August 2020 check by clerk*

Summary of ratings:

Section / Level >	1 - 2	3 - 4	6 - 9
Finance & Management	6	5	1
IT & Data	3	4	1
Lands & Buildings	7	8	2
Liability & Litigation	5		
Conduct of meetings	3		

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Ref	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
BC1	Business continuity (BC1)	Council not able to function due to unforeseen circumstances	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a Business Continuity Plan in place. All files and recent records (both paper and electronic) are kept at the Parish Office. The ability to work off site is available should the need arise. A regular Agenda item is the status of the Risk Assessment. 	The Council uses Office 365 and Clerk will implement SharePoint for managing file backup.
F1	Precept (F1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequacy of Precept Errors in budgeting Request not submitted to Vale WHDC 	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council reviews the Precept requirement annually at the December meeting. Clerk aware of January precept deadline. Vale sends form. There is a quarterly budget review. Provision made for cost of election in election year. 	
F2	Financial records (2, 3, 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccurate financial records Lost or stolen cash book Excessive reserves drawdown OCC payment not made Incorrect invoicing or amount invoiced not received 	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full list of payments, receipts and payments to be made is provided at each PC meeting. Direct payments on dual authority operating. Accounts, cash book and bank reconciliation are monitored monthly by a rotating Councillor. Payment for newsletter ads required before 2nd insertion. Commercial accounting system in use 2020 	
F3	Bank and banking (6,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unauthorised access to bank accounts Payment of fraudulent invoice. Fraud involving payment by cheque. Loss of cheque not noticed. 	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Password protected; Password & logon combination changed each visit. Bank reconciliation done monthly by RFO & Councillor All payments require approval by 2 Councillors 	
F4	Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's insurance policy has a Fidelity Guarantee. Council is phasing out use of petty cash 	
F5	Grants and donations from PC (9)	Grants paid without authority or without funds being available.	1	1	1	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	
F6	s106 and similar income (12, 13)	Project changed so no longer within spec or funds not claimed in time.	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring of project plans against s106 agreement. Querying acceptable use as plans develop. 	

Ref	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
F7	Best value Accountability (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That there is inadequate specification of work. That work is awarded incorrectly. There is inadequate checking of submitted tenders. There is reliance on contractors not proven to be value for money by competitive tendering. 	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council seeks if possible more than one quotation for any substantial work or goods. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders are sought. For item-value more than £500 specification is checked and signed off by a Councillor and checked on completion by a Councillor. If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk will investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council. 	
F8	Salaries and associated costs (19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary paid incorrectly due to wrong hours or wrong rate. Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI to the Inland Revenue 	2	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly time sheets submitted by each staff member. Tax and NI calculated using online HMRC system. Employers Final Payment is completed and submitted online to the Inland Revenue by the Clerk. Internal & External Auditors. Commercial software in use as per audit recommendations 	
F9	Insurance (14, 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate cover found when making claim, Compliance and Fidelity Guarantee inadequate. 	2	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance is be adhered to with regards to Fraud. The Clerk is provided with any requested training, reference books, access to legal advice. PC has membership of OALC. PC regularly looks at alternative insurance companies. The PC has sufficient reserves to enable training in the event of the Clerk resigning. 	
F10	VAT	Re-claiming/charging error	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk submits returns at 3-monthly intervals. Cash book page showing this sent to Councillors 	
F11	Tenant organisations (20)	Tenants defaulting or ending lease.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain sufficient regular contact with the organisations to be aware of any problems. Confirm that organisation has appropriate insurance & risk assessment. 	

IT, INTERNET & DATA STORAGE

Ref.	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
ID1	PC web pages (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying incorrect or unintelligible material, harming PC's reputation 	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk updates existing documents and uploads new ones as required. Old / legacy documents reviewed / removed. Web posts to be Accessibility-compliant from September 2020. Council approved Accessibility Statement as minimum management of website September 2020 	DONE
ID2	PC web pages (2, 3)	Not available due to website going down or webmaster not available.	1	2	2	Server backed up daily, allowing rapid restoration	
ID3	PC web site (4, 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website unavailable so Councillors unable to carry out duties due to lack of email traffic. Online documents unavailable to public 	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domain name and server renewed automatically. Outlook used for email. 	By 1/9/2020 intended that Office 365 and SharePoint providing cloud-based storage for documents and emails. Sept 2020 – SharePoint not available in current Office 365 package
ID4	PC web pages (6)	Interruption to work & communications due to loss of password	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk maintains an inventory of passworded IT assets has a plan for obtaining the password if the normal password holder is not available. 	
ID5	Data protection regulations GDPR (7)	Council is in breach of GDPR regulations resulting in reputational damage, possible fine.	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk and at least one member of PC has some GDPR training. Data consent being collected and collated by Clerk. 	
ID6	Data breach (8)	Unauthorised access to IT equipment due to lack of IT or physical security	1	3	3	Laptop not left in office	
ID7	Website accessibility Regulations	WCAG 2018 regulations not complied with (comes into force Sept. 2020)	1	2	2	Documents and web pages checked by nominated Councillor who reports to Clerk or Council	Apr 2021; Councillor appointed for checks
ID8	Freedom of Information Act	Legislation not complied with	1	1	1	The Council has an advertised publication scheme in place. Clerk reports annually to PC on FOI requests.	

LANDS & BUILDINGS

Ref	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
L1	Recreation Ground (L3, un-numbered, 6)	Site safety & security – injury to public due to lack of maintenance or inspection or faulty equipment, and possible claim against PC	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly check of site and equipment by grounds staff and additionally after high winds Play and exercise equipment is inspected weekly by staff and monthly by a Councillor on rota. There is an annual inspection by RoSPA. Public Liability Insurance in place. 	Consider if separate entry required for <u>injury</u> from falling tree - there was a new entry in Feb 2020. One hopes there will not be visitors in the vicinity of trees in high winds; if a tree is damaged the result is usually a stable situation which can be dealt with after inspection.
L2	Trees on Council Lands	Tree maintenance not adequate and therefore risk to public from falling branch or tree leading to injury and claim.	3	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-yearly tree inspection by certified person. Relevant areas are rec, cemetery and churchyard. Follow-up work on 2018 survey ongoing. 	
L3	Dogs exercised on Council lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dogs allowed off lead, leading to possible danger to other members of the public through dog mess. And in long grass a health risk to staff when strimming 	1	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users of rec asked to clear up any mess their dog deposits Dogs not required to be on leads, meaning there is no possibility of owners ensuring they do not foul the ground. 	Review rating. Reduce strimming in the areas concerned! <i>If the PC is serious about preventing fouling it needs to require dogs to be on a lead. Clerk to report.</i>
L4	Grounds staff equipment and shed (L4, 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment shed damage, theft of or damage to equipment; damage to roof leading to loose asbestos and injury to staff. 	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure padlock used. In daily use so damage would be quickly noticed and reported. Cement-bound asbestos normally considered safe. roof inspection carried out <i>August 2020; low risk from asbestos as long as roof not damaged or broken up. If broken up in future must be done by specialist contractors.</i> 	
L4a	Grounds staff equipment when in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft from unattended pick-up or building 	3	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lock shed when unattended. 	Lock pavilion / new premises when unattended. Cover tools on pick-up with secured sheet. Consider secure box on pick-up

L5	Hazardous substances (B1, 2)	Injury to staff or public through mishandling	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment, training, PPE provided in line with HSE requirements. Strong materials (including bleach) replaced with milder ones. Storage in line with HSE requirements 	Fuel kept in flamvault at rear of pavilion – see L14.
Ref	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
L6	Ground staff hazards	Ground staff possible injury due to incorrect manual handling, working at height, use of equipment.	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff advised of risks. Staff required to complete risk assessment before undertaking work when using machinery and forward to the Clerk at the end of the day. Training provided for staff where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk maintaining register of staff competences. Clerk reviewing list of jobs for which staff complete a risk assessment. (machine is a rather vague term – maybe ‘power tool’ Clerk to review risk assessment to see whether vibration from power tools is likely to be an issue
L7	Fire risk (39)	Possible damage to equipment or injury to staff or public.	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office is part of village hall with fire alarm system providing alert to security company. Equipment fuel kept in secure stores. Pavilion will be responsibility of scouts on completion of lease. 	
L8	Rec car park (L7)	Injury / claim by member of public having accident due to congestion caused by vehicle-parking outside of allowed use.	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing action to prevent misuse. Sign erected saying overnight parking not allowed. Persistent offenders written to? 	Considering gates / height restriction
L9	Rec car park (L8)	Injury to / claim by member of public after accident or injury due to tripping on of root-damaged surface and residual kerbs.	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most use is in daylight. When Harwellian club is open they have some outside lighting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting being considered as part of refurbishment. Also improved layout, resurfacing and marking
L10	Rec. (L12)	Illegal occupancy of main grounds	2	2	4	Bollards at edge of car park, one unlocked for vehicle access when required.	Considering gates / height restriction
L11	Cemetery & Churchyard (L2)	Injury to public and claim against PC due to poor maintenance.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular maintenance, annual inspection of headstones. Contractor would be engaged in case of staff shortfall. 	
L12	Allotments (L1)	Risk of theft, damage or fly-tipping, or claim against PC for poor maintenance.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gates padlocked by plot-holders when leaving. Plot-holders able to report any problems to Clerk or liaison Councillor. Low record of vandalism on the site. Staff visit several times per month. 	Chain-link fencing n gates to be removed as possible source of injury. <i>DONE summer 2020</i>

L13	Bus Shelters, noticeboard, litter bins (L9)	Risk of damage or vandalism, therefore cost of and possible injury to public.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff check shelters regularly and repair as necessary; covered by insurance. Bins emptied weekly and maintained as required. 	Frequency of bus shelter checks to be reviewed.
Ref	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
L14	Pavilion	Risk of claim by users, or public due to unsafe exterior.	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pavilion lease to Scouts almost completed. Residual use and storage by Feast and HHYFC. HPC continues to insure building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exterior responsibility stays with PC? If so, does this include doors? (main door rotting at bottom!) Are locks being changed? Small flamvault store to be relocated to inside garage.
L15	New staff building	Risk of injury to public, damage, theft or vandalism during construction	1	2	2	Area will be securely fenced during construction.	<p>Will materials be left in car park, for example near pavilion? For example a skip that public will think they can fill? Fenced area should be adequate for contingencies, e.g. skips.</p> <p><i>Sept 2020 – site meeting with Vitex; secure compound to be erected on rec when work begins</i></p> <p>Feb 2021 onwards – Vitex compound kept locked.</p>
L16	Covid-19	Risk to staff and public if staff don't follow rules on maintaining distance and cleanliness.	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk has agreed procedures with grounds staff – see separate document. Clerk checking weekly that procedures being followed, and reporting monthly to PC. Office currently closed (8/6/2020). Notices put on Allotment entrances. Staff risk assessment for machinery amended. <i>Play area was not re-opened until checks made and signage in place</i> Clerk followed Govt lockdown regulations applicable to gym eqpt, play area Nov 2020-Apr 2021 	

LIABILITY & LITIGATION

Ref.	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further action and actionee
LL1	Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	1	1	1	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council (not ultra vires) and to be resolved and clearly minuted.	
LL2	Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents (LL4)	Accuracy and legality of Business conduct	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 as prescribed. Agendas have item for Councillors to declare conflicts of interest. 	<p>CLRs to be familiar with Standing Orders and to adhere to Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Policy on retention of documents? Clerk to report.</p>
LL3	Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance is in place. Risk Assessments regularly carried out / updated. Designated Councillor reviews Risk Assessment. RA made a regular agenda item. 	
LL4	Employer Liability	Risk of non-compliance with employment law, injury to staff	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk undertakes adequate training and seeks advice from OALC if necessary. Staff to be trained adequately for tasks performed. Register kept by Clerk of staff competences. 	
LL5	Legal Liability	Legality of activities - proper and timely reporting via Minutes, Proper document control	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk clarifies legal position on Agenda proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves Minutes at monthly meetings. Retention of document policy in place. 	

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Ref.	Subject	Risk(s) Identified	P	I	R	Current Management/Control of Risk	Further actions
CM1	Meeting procedure (CM3)	Standing Orders not followed, possibly leading to claim by member of public regarding decision taken	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk advises of legal requirements. • Meeting postponed if not quorate. • Minutes taken and reviewed. • Video recording of virtual meetings • Standing Orders & policies reviewed annually 	Councillors to make themselves cognisant of Standing Orders.
CM2	Members interests	Conflict of interest not declared and therefore Councillors not seen to be acting with propriety	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors have a duty to declare any relevant interest before a particular item of business. • Register of Member's Interest form held by District Council is reviewed regularly by each Councillor. 	
CM3	Meetings locations	Adequacy of Health & Safety	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All actual Meetings are held at the Village Hall. • Building insured and checked regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 renders them not useable for the present. • Clerk to report if any Councillor is having problems using zoom for online meetings. • Return to physical meetings discussed Apr 2021. Council bound under duty of care to workers, councillors and visitors to ensure safety prioritised. Decided to stay with virtual meetings in spite of legislation.