RISK ASSESSMENT

Classification: Public

Version 3: 2019

Version Control

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| V1 | Reviewed by Management Committee | 01.04.19 |
| V2 | Reviewed at Main Meeting | 01.05.19 |
| V3 | Reviewed and Adopted at Annual Meeting | 15.05.19 |

**The Risk Assessment**

The Parish Office is located at 126 Kingsfold and owned by The Council. It has electronic external roll down shutters on all doors and windows. The main door has a remote controlled roll down shutter. The building also has a monitored security system and has the following rooms within it:

* Main reception with electronic door access and security alarm system, ceiling lights and electric plug sockets, smoke detector and three radiators
* A small office room (Parish Ranger’s) with ceiling lights, plug sockets, laptop, telephone and radiator
* An Archive Store which has an electronic door access fitted and ceiling light
* The storage area has been removed and turned back into an office for the use of Councillors, with ceiling lights, electric plug sockets and computer
* Cupboard housing the fuse box, electricity meter, BT connection and security system
* Kitchen containing the gas boiler, gas meter, water stop cock, heat detector, radiator, ceiling lights and electric plug sockets. The

following appliances are used in this location – kettle, toaster and microwave.

* Inner hall with access to the ladies and gents’ toilets and a door to the next hall way. It has ceiling lights, electric plug sockets, smoke detector and the disabled toilet alarm system. Accessed by pin code.
* Toilets have ceiling lights, electric hand dryers and radiators and are DDA compliant, The Ladies toilet has a metal cabinet locked, with all liquid cleaning supplies.
* The next hall way allows access to the main parish office, the Parish Clerk/Responsible Officer’s office, the Office Manager’s office, the Council Chambers and the meeting room. It has ceiling lights and electric plug sockets.
* The main office has a reception counter with Perspex grill and a safety glass sliding door onto the reception area, a photocopier, telephones, printer and three PC’s and monitors. It has ceiling lights, electric plug sockets, a smoke detector, radiator, panic alarm and electronic door entry release button and intercom for the buildings main door entry system. The second office is accessed via the main office. Also there is a panic alarm to be worn by lone workers.
* Second office has a radiator, ceiling light, plug sockets, a printer, PC and monitor. The third office is accessed via this office.
* Third office has a radiator, ceiling lights, electric plug sockets and is used by the RFO. It also has a one way emergency exit door into the meeting room to access the rear emergency exit door from the building.
* Council Chambers has two radiators, ceiling lights, smoke detector, electric plug sockets, release button and intercom for the buildings main electronic door entry system. It also has three cupboards in it, one for the caretaker’s non liquid cleaning equipment and materials which are kept locked, one for the storage of the spare meeting room chairs, and one for the storage of the hot water tank, immersion heater and central heating timer controls. This is also kept locked. The meeting room has two one way emergency exit doors into it from the third parish office and the meeting room. These must be kept clear at all times. The meeting room has a rear emergency exit door to the outside of the building.
* Meeting /Training room has a smoke detector, ceiling lights, electric plug sockets, release button and intercom for the buildings main electronic door entry system, it also has a one way emergency exit door into the Council Chambers to access the buildings rear emergency exit.

Eight people are employed by the Parish Council. They are: Parish Clerk/Proper Officer, Office Manager, Responsible Financial Officer/ Parish Ranger, 3 x Administrators, Cleaner, all staff have contracts of employment, three are key holders. The Parish Ranger and Cleaner undertake duties in and around the Parish on their own. Some members of staff work in the office on their own. All of these functions are covered in the Council’s Lone Worker Policy which is reviewed regularly (at least once a year) and staff will attend briefings and be provided with an updated copy each time that it is amended.

The building is accessed through a single door on the front of the building. This is secured with a remote control roll down metal shutter. The door has a double locking system, a single key lock and an electronic door entry system that is accessed with a fob. The windows when the building is empty are secured by electronic controlled external roll down metal shutters. The main door to the Parish Office is locked when vacating the building and a monitored alarm system is switched on and the roll down external shutter on the front door is closed. The alarm system has a panic button for staff within the main parish office and when activated would activate the audible alarm in the building and at the monitoring centre which send out a response team.

The Council also owns Wylie Drop In, Crispin Road. It has two offices, a DDA compliant toilet and a meeting room.

We have buildings and contents insurance, public liability and employer liability insurance plus money and fidelity guarantee insurance as detailed below:

* Buildings insurance for the Parish Office at 126 Kingsfold, Bradville
* Buildings insurance for Wylie Drop
* Buildings insurance for the toilet on the allotment site
* Contents insurance for the items as listed on appendix A.
* Public liability insurance that covers all of the above premises and Council activities
* Public liability insurance does not cover allotment tenants cultivating their own or other plots.
* Public liability insurance cover does not have any age restrictions
* The fidelity insurance is currently £90,000 which is a little more than the half year credit due from the precept. This is likely to be the maximum sum that is at risk at any one time from fraud.

The Council owns an allotment site on Bradwell Road. Access is through palisade gates that are kept locked when the allotments are unattended. The site also has a block built toilet for use by allotment gardeners. The allotment site is managed by the Parish Council and is insured under the above policy.

We have forty-one dog waste bins. Some of these are emptied weekly and some twice a week and cleaned every other month and are checked by the Parish Ranger on a regular basis whilst carrying out his duties. They also have a telephone number displayed on them to report if they are full or damaged. Any damage they might do to individuals is covered under the public liability insurance.

This risk assessment does not cover any fire related items as this is covered by a separate ‘Fire Risk Assessment’.

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| **Risk** | **Level of risk**  **H=high M=Medium, L=low** | **Cause** | **Precautions** |
| Loss of use of the office, loss of equipment and records. | L | Break in and vandalism or natural disaster | All Council owned buildings have external roll down shutters that are locked in place when the building is empty and have monitored internal security alarms systems and the Parish Office at 126 Kingsfold also has external CCTV cameras.  The Councils main files are on Microsoft 365 and are guaranteed to be backed up and restored in the event of theft or fire.  The deeds for the Parish Office and Wylie Drop In are retained by the Solicitor and a copy in the safe within the Clerk’s office. The Clerk and the Chairman have access to the safe.  Incoming correspondence could be lost as could all the paper archive although these are stored in metal cabinets in the main office, some in the 2nd office and some in metal cabinets in a locked cupboard in the 3rd office. The older documents are in the Archive storage area which is locked at all times. |
| Damage or injury to property or individuals arising from using the facilities for which we are responsible | M | Accidental damage or injury to persons or equipment | Ensure that all equipment that the Council is responsible for is checked on a regular basis and maintained. This is carried out by the Caretaker on a monthly basis. All cables are checked for signs of wear and tear. All electrical items are PAT tested every year to ensure they are safe to use.  Any items that are damaged are taken out of use to be repaired or replaced.  We have public liability insurance. This provides cover in relation to injury suffered by members of the public using the open spaces at any Parish Council event, the office and meeting rooms, Wylie Drop In, the Allotments or any hall etc owned / rented by us.  We have employers’ liability insurance cover on employees, Council members and volunteer workers.  **Parish Office, 126 Kingsfold, Bradville:**  The main door to the building has an electronic locking system. Visitors given access to the building can speak to staff through an open internal window on the reception counter. The internal Parish Office also has a monitored response panic alarm button fitted and a remote monitored response panic alarm for Lone Working within the building. The building also has external CCTV fitted on all sides of the building.  **Wylie Drop In, Crispin Road, Bradville:**  The entrance door has a beeper on it that goes off when the door is opened to alert staff and visitors that someone has entered or is leaving the building. An intercom system has been installed so that when a member of staff is working alone in the office the outside door can be kept locked. When locked the keys must be left in the lock to allow a speedy exit in case of emergency. The building also has a monitored response panic alarm fitted in the front office. |
| External Risks associated with service provision in the Parish.   * The dog bins * Patrols carried out by the Parish Ranger * Allotments * Notice boards | L  M  M to L  L | Accidental damage or injury to persons or equipment | The dog bins have been covered above and are low risk.  A risk assessment of the Parish Ranger’s duties has been completed and processes defined to minimise the risks whilst carrying out her duties.  The terms and conditions clearly define what can and cannot be done on the allotments by tenants. The allotments are managed by the Council with the assistance of an Allotment Committee and are visited by Councillors and tenant representatives on a regular basis. The Council have insurance which includes public and employer liability.  Visual inspection by Parish Council personnel who would report any defects. All assets are insured and reviewed annually. |
| Functional Risk | Is low to medium risk but has a potentially high impact  Loss of Councillor membership or having more than 7 vacancies at any one time | Inappropriate use of powers or inappropriate conduct | The current code of conduct involves greater information being supplied by members, which should increase protection against claims of interest or inappropriate action.  We have wide-ranging powers, but all decisions must be clearly considered and approved to avoid allegations of maladministration or actions being *ultra vires* (eg S.137 payments). The internal audit required under the current audit regime should highlight any problems in this area.  Regular revision of Standing Orders and definition of committee executive powers is undertaken. District Audit has approved our past actions, which gives a measure of protection.  Compliance with employment law has been improved, and the Clerk’s and other staff members’ salary conform to national pay scales. The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees through a Committee. Salary rates are assessed annually by the HR Committee and applied on 1 April each year. Salary analysis and slips are produced by the RFO monthly together with a schedule of payments to the Inland Revenue (for Tax and NI). These are inspected at the Council meetings and signed off. The salaries and Tax and NI are worked out on a computer programme updated annually. All Tax and NI payments are submitted in the Inland Revenue Annual Return and the RTI system. Each employee has a contract of employment and job description. The Clerk/Responsible Officer has a contract of employment and job description. All contracts of employment contain a section on overpayment and recoup. Salaries are paid in arrears.  The Council has a Data Protection Policy  The requirements under the Freedom of Information Act impose greater obligations to publish information or provide public access to documentation. Reporting of business, through minutes and other means should be regularly reviewed, together with adherence to consultation time limits and document control.  Our budgetary process does comply with current requirements.  Ongoing training for the Clerk/Responsible Officer and staff is essential and all Councillors should be actively encouraged to seek both formal and informal training.  Initial legal costs of any challenge against, or by, the Council are covered in the legal cost set aside (see Legal Risk).  When a vacancy arises, there is a legal process to follow. This either leads to a bye-election at a cost or into a co-option process. An election is out of the Parish Council’s control. The co-option process begins with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting then appointment. If there are more than 7 vacancies at any one time on the Council it becomes inquorate. The legal process of the Milton Keynes Council appointing members takes place.  A sum of money should be budgeted in case a by-election is called. |
| Minutes/ Agendas/  Notices Statutory  documents  Accuracy and legality  Business conduct | L | Administrative | Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and Chairman, and adhere to the legal requirements and best practice guidelines.  Minutes are approved and signed at the following Council meeting.  Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements.  Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair. |
| Financial Risk | L to M  L to M  L to M  L to M  L | Errors in activity/accounting  Fraud  Loss of funds  Financial reserves & contingency | The Council has an accounting system and use of the XERO software package. This allows for all income and expenditure including Allotment rents to be accounted for.  Financial Regulations are in place and are followed.  All financial transactions are approved by, and reported to, the Council on a regular basis, and financial records are properly maintained and meet with approval of both internal and external auditors.  The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) currently produces a monthly report, which is submitted to Council for approving payments or retrospective payment decisions.  The attribution of funds against our available legal powers has been improved, to reduce the possibility of inappropriate use. Further checks are provided through Internal Controls. The current arrangements are satisfactory and are as follows:  Annual Return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit.  **Internal Scrutineer**  A Councillor that understands the financial process is nominated annually to be an internal scrutineer and undertakes a bi-monthly check of the accounts and annual check of the audit and provides a written report at least twice a year to the Council. See Appendix A.  **Internal Audit**  An internal auditor has taken up the work. This is a person independent of the Council, yet with a grasp of financial affairs and an understanding of local  Government. The internal auditor’s report is a major element in the audit  system and we must be able to show internal audit is in force. See Appendix B    **External audit**  Some Parish and Town Councils use Certified Accountants to produce their Annual Accounts for the Annual Return. We continue to use our current RFO and do not have any cause to recommend accountants for preparation of our annual financial report.  All of the above controls, applied to the Clerk/Responsible Officer and RFO activities, will reduce the possibility of any fraud. The requirements for Fidelity Guarantee will also result in greater overview of this area.  **Fidelity Guarantee**  The Fidelity Guarantee has a limit of £90,000 and the imposition of tight requirements for internal scrutiny.  We have virtually no income or funds received from external sources other than Allotment rental which is banked manually, Precept from Milton Keynes Council and VAT refunds from HM Customs & Excise, which are paid by electronic transfer. Banking of other payments is regulated by the terms of our insurance cover, which is closely followed. While it is unlikely that our banks will collapse, the interest received on our funds in the bank which is historically low is regularly reviewed.  Our financial reserves are at a satisfactory levelbut this should be reviewed annually as part of the budget process, to ensure prudent cover is maintained and the precept covers foreseeable demands. These also include the balance of the £45,000 from the sale of the lease to Thames Valley Police.  Although auditors do not generally approve ‘contingency’ funds, it would be appropriate to carry forward a reasonable balance on the revenue account each year and this should be reviewed and agreed in the budget process. |
| Precept Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to MKC in time  Amount not received by MKC | L | Administrative function | To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council regularly receives budget update information and the precept is an agenda item at full Council.  At the Precept meeting Council receives a budget update report, including actual position and projected position to end the year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk/Responsible Officer. With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Milton Keynes Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk/Responsible Officer in writing to MKC. Precept should be considered by Council before the deadline - deadline should be ascertained from MKC asap. The Clerk/Responsible Officer informs Council when the monies are received (approx. April and Oct time). |
| Personnel Risk | L to M  L to M  L to M  L to M | Administrative Functions  Employers Liability  Loss of Manager  Legal Action Risk | Although these may not be considered a ‘risk’, sound administrative procedures will be a requirement for ‘Quality Council’ status. The internal auditor is also expected to consider our administrative procedures and standards. Our approach controls and methods are separately reviewed.  It is recognised that the Clerk/Parish Manager, Administrator and Parish Ranger work alone for much of the time and this presents some risks should they suffer an accident, assault or illness. We have investigated methods of assuring their safety. Risk assessments for their duties have been completed and we have a lone worker policy. Workers have been issued with personal attack alarms and the office is equipped with a monitored response panic alarm. The Council carries employers’ liability insurance, which covers most of the foreseeable risks. Further risk mitigation could be sought.  Loss of the Clerk/Parish Manager is a risk which is difficult to estimate, but which the Council faces in common with many other small employers. It includes both the financial risk of employing cover personnel while the Clerk/Responsible Officer is ill and the disruption that could occur from the Clerk’s/Responsible Officer absence on a temporary or permanent basis. A degree of risk mitigation may be achieved through a number of measures, involving different levels of financial expenditure, and including:  a) Awareness of the administrative and other functions by the Administrators. Also any Councillors who can cover the tasks on a voluntary basis;  b) Health insurance, providing for prompt treatment. As the current Clerk has no history sickness absence then cover for sick periods may seem unnecessary. Cover for sickness/holidays should be made to avoid unnecessary pile up of work on the Clerk return. This can be done by the Administrator working extra hours during these periods.  c) The working hours of the Administrator have been increased to five hours a day so that she can be trained in all processes, so that in the event that the Parish Manager were on long term sick or leave, the basic day to day running of the Council can be covered until a replacement is found. The main risk is that although trained in all processes unless they are carried out on a regular basis staff are not confident or proficient in carrying out the tasks, particularly the financial tasks. All staff are paid by Standing Order so that even if PAYE has not been completed all staff are in receipt of funds by the last day of the month.  Legal Expenses Cover is mandatory at a premium. There are conditions that should be read and observed regarding Employment Contract. Other conditions appear to be standard for Insurance Companies.  The financial reserves do not include a specific sum set aside for unexpected legal costs. Although this sum should not be a substantial amount, it should be sufficient to cover the costs of initiating or defending actions under planning, Freedom of Information, Race Equality etc, this could impact on the general reserve in severe cases. Our insurance will insure us against some claims against us. The Council should consider including such a sum in the budget in future. |