

# **BOROUGH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**



**ESTABLISHED 1934**

## **Risk Assessment**

**August 2020**

**Adopted 7th September 2020**

**Minute 122 (b)**

**Chairman: Francis Michael Taylor**

**Proper Officer/Responsible Financial Officer: Bernard Galopin**

## **Purpose of document**

This document is produced to enable Borough Green Parish Council to assess, manage and mitigate risks that are identified as part of its formal business as a parish council. This will enable the Council to demonstrate responsibility and management of Council risks and also to make an adequate declaration in its return to the external auditors. This policy is supported by the use of a Council Risk Register, which details specific risk management activities.

The risks have been divided into a number of categories as shown below. For each category, the action currently being taken to manage the risks are recorded.

## **Risks**

### **1. Loss of Financial Control**

The Council seeks to maintain financial control by a number of controls.

#### a. Fixed Asset Register (FAR)

The Council maintains a list of tangible fixed assets that it owns. This list is reviewed quarterly and records assets at their cost or Net Realisable Value basis. The FAR is supported by a physical inspection and inventory check of assets.

#### b. Bank Accounts

The Council has four bank accounts at two banks:

- Three x NatWest bank accounts (West Malling).
- One x Metro Bank (Maidstone).
- Two banks from separate and distinct banking groups are used for Council business to ensure that the FSCS threshold provision of £85,000 is adhered to, thereby protecting Council funds up to £85,000 at each bank.

Natwest:

- One x Current Account which receives income and makes payments.
- Two x Business Reserve Accounts (interest bearing).
- An arrangement is in place with NatWest bank to automatically transfer between the Business Reserve Account 1 and the Current Account to continually maintain a balance of £100 in the Current Account, thereby maximising interest payable.

Metro Bank:

- One x Savings Account (interest bearing).

4 x councillors are authorised signatories and the monthly Bank Automated Clearing System (BACS) lists or cheques are signed by 2 of those councillors at a public meeting.

#### c. Annual Budget

The Council produces a periodic budget and the precept is set on the basis of these figures.

#### d. Financial Reporting

- At every Parish Council meeting the Parish Clerk/RFO presents a statement of payments made since the previous Parish Council meeting and cheques or BAC lists are presented for signature at the meeting.
- Bank reconciliation statements for all bank accounts are presented with accompanying bank statements.
- An analysis of income and expenditure is produced and presented quarterly.

e. Auditing of Accounts

- Internal: The Council has an internal auditor who reports on the internal controls and compliance of operating procedures against guidelines and standards.
- External: The Council has its accounts audited by external auditors in order to express an opinion whether the accounts give a 'True and Fair' representation of the financial performance and position of the Council.

f. Best Value

- The Council follows procurement procedures as detailed in their Financial Regulations when placing orders. These Financial Regulations along with Standing Orders are reviewed annually.
- The normal practice is to seek competitive quotations although there will be occasions when the Council would wish to use the services of local charities. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders are sought.

**2. Data Protection Breaches**

- All lever arch files and folders are stored in a storage cabinet, with all archived materials stored separately in a purpose-built room in the Village Hall.
- Data backup is automatic via Microsoft Cloud (ONE DRIVE) with secondary internal backup onto memory stick.
- All files on the Clerks PC containing personal data are individually password protected.
- To comply with General Data Protection Regulations, the Council's Privacy Notice and Retention Policy is reviewed annually.

**3. Injury and Harm to Third Parties**

The Council regularly undertakes a visual inspection of the condition of its assets to ensure that its health and safety obligations are met, and it takes appropriate action to minimise any risk of injury to third parties. The Council has insurance cover to enable it to meet any third-party liability that it might face if an accident were to occur and the Council found to be liable.

The Council has four principle areas of risk. In addition to the general undertaking above and the insurance cover secured, the Council seeks to manage these risks by the following further measures.

a. Recreation Ground

- This area of land covers the children's' play area, the tennis courts, the playing field, the Pavilion and entrance car park.
- Council staff visit the site every weekday and occasionally at weekend to inspect the grounds and equipment, clean, repair and litter pick and report anything that could be dangerous to users. Surfaces are regularly pressure washed to remove moss/weeds.
- The site can be closed if there are perceived dangers to users.
- The Council seeks a monthly independent inspection (Landscape Services) and report and consider follow up action at the monthly Council meetings.

b. Potters Mede

- This area consists of the buildings (hall, kitchen area, Taylor Room, changing rooms, entrance car park and football pitches).
- Council staff visit the site every week day and occasionally over weekends to inspect the grounds and facilities, clean, repair and litter pick.

c. Harrison Road

- This is an area of land that the Council purchased in April 2020. It does not contain any public amenities.

d. Skate Park

- The Skate Park is a Tri-Parish project that is managed separately by the Whitegate Field Skate Park Committee, consisting of membership from each council.
- The park is insured under an additional policy taken out by the Committee.
- Council staff visit the site daily to litter pick, inspect, report and repair anything that could be perceived as dangerous
- The Whitegate Field Skate Park Committee seeks an inspection and report from RoSPA on an annual basis, and 3 quarterly operational inspections from Landscape Services (Kent County Council). Kent County Council are also asked to inspect any alterations to ramps or equipment made during the twelve-month period between annual inspections.

**4. Trees**

Over many years risks from trees have been managed and have not been high on the list of public concerns. However, attitudes to risk are changing and, in a risk averse society the duty of care has become more onerous. Given the importance of trees the risks they pose need to be managed with their protection and conservation. The Council has identified the following sites which contain trees: Recreation Ground, Potters Mede and Harrison Road.

All mature trees owned by the Council will be subject to an expert inspection by a qualified arboriculturist. Trees will be assessed by means of scheduled systematic visual assessment initially from ground level. Assessments will usually consist of a staged approach and compare the tree being inspected to a notional healthy, vigorous and defect free specimen. This staged approach may include:

- Visual inspection of the tree for defect symptoms and overall vitality. If there are no signs of any problems the assessment is concluded.
- If a defect is suspected on the basis of the symptoms, the presence or absence of that defect must be confirmed by thorough examination.
- If the defect is confirmed, it must be quantified, remedial action should be identified and priority/urgency of works recorded.

On an annual basis Kent Men of Trees conduct an annual inspection of all of the trees on BGPC land. Following expert inspections remedial action will be conducted as follows:

- Category 1 immediate action
- Category 2 high priority action within 6-12 months
- Category 3 medium priority action within 12-24 months
- Category 4 no action required until next scheduled inspection / monitor.

**5. Covid 19 Pandemic – Risk of Infection on Council Premises**

The Council has adopted Government Guidelines in regards to managing the risk of infection posed by the Covid 19 pandemic at Potters Mede. An individual risk assessment has been produced for the Potters Mede Hall and hirers are expected to produce their own risk assessments. This has been published on the Council website. The play area at the Recreation Ground has been risk assessed and advice and guidelines have been posted on the Council website.