Ardleigh Parish Council Risk Management Policy

The Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk (with the Chair or other Councillors) shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy and assessment in respect of activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk (with the Chair or other Councillors) shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

Strategic Risks and major threats

The greatest risk facing the Council is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected by Parish residents.

This risk assessment is a strategic examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that enable the Parish Council to identify potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the Council should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practicable, making sure that all employees and members are made aware of the results of the risk assessment.

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following main points have been followed and the register constructed accordingly.

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what any risks and document
- Assess the risk and document the findings
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review, assess and revise where required.

Risk control is the process which is taken to reduce the likelihood of a risk event occurring or mitigates the effects that risk should it occur. This risk control approach is to use the four T's Process:

- <u>Transferring Risk</u> can be achieved through the use of various forms of insurance, or the payment to third parties who are prepared to take the risk on behalf of the Council.
- <u>Tolerating Risk</u> is where no action is taken to mitigate or reduce a risk. This may be because the cost of instituting risk reduction or mitigation activity is not cost-effective, or the risks of impact are at so low that they are deemed acceptable to the Council.
- <u>Treating Risk</u> is a method of controlling risk through actions that reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or minimize its impact prior to its occurrence. Also, there are contingent measures that can be developed to reduce the impact of an event once it has occurred.
- <u>Terminating Risk</u> is the simplest method of dealing with risk. It involves risk elimination. This is be done by altering an inherently risky process or practice to remove the risk. If an item presents a risk and can be changed or removed without it materially affecting the business, then removing the risk should be the first option considered; rather than attempting the treat, tolerate or transfer it.

Points and areas identified are dealt with in the table that follows and assessed and recorded accordingly. The aim is to proactively address the risks especially where the likelihood of occurrence or resulting impact (or a combination of the two) is assessed as high.

Ardleigh Parish Council Strategic Risk Register

Strategic Risk	Consequence/ comment	Risk Likelihood /impact or consequences See key below	Established management action and control of risk	Key documents and further resources, guidance and/or evidence.	Further actions or review
1) Financial impropriety or irregularities, failure to meet legal requirements and/or governance and accountability expectations.	Fraudulent, careless or poor use of Council funds, not in line with Council objectives. Insufficient funds available for unexpected costs (eg elections)	Rare/Major Low risk overall	The Council has Financial Regulations and procedures, based on NALC Model. The system of internal control clearly sets out the financial controls. Annual budget agreed (at or before January meeting each year) and regular management accounts produced. Bank reconciliation completed regularly. Quotes gathered for work/ contracts to ensure best value. Fidelity insurance Reserves policy agreed January 2021 and sufficient reserves in place to cover the areas in the policy.	Financial Regulations/System of Internal Control/Reserves Policy Budget and Precept setting (minutes) Financial reports to the Council Insurance policies Internal auditor report & papers External Audit / Governance and Accountability Return. Minutes of, and papers to, meetings showing payments authorised and made. Payroll, pension, HMRC returns. VAT claims. Contracts with third parties.	Consider whether an additional step is needed for online banking. Payments could be checked/ approved by councillor(s) before leaving the bank.
2) Failure to progress business of Council. Insufficient and/or suitably skilled Councillors and/or staff members.	Meetings inquorate. Members and officers not sufficiently skilled to discharge duties effectively. Poor relationships between Council members and /or officers.	Possible/Moderate Medium risk overall	Formal documents in place and followed. Membership of NALC and Essex ALC with access to information, advice, training and legal briefings. Clerk advises Council and seeks external guidance as necessary. All Councillors are expected to attend New Councillor training and other	Standing Orders Code of Conduct (updated 2023 confirmed 2024) Civility and Respect pledge signed and Officer/Member relations protocol adopted. Appointment of Deputy Clerk to improve continuity and back-up.	Review arrangements to provide back up to Clerk, prioritise workload and improve support to Councillors following appointment of new Deputy Clerk.

	Conflicts of interest.		potentially beneficial training is available to staff and Councillors.	Councillors Declarations of Acceptance of Office and Declarations of Interests Training records Regular updates from EALC and NALC circulated to members. Declarations of Pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest at each meeting.	Council to take time to identify and focus on priorities (review meeting structure to facilitate this). Consider advertising for new Councillors seeking to be representative of the wider community through co-option. Consider skills audit of Councillors to inform allocation of responsibilities.
3) Formal complaints and/or litigation as a result of council decisions or actions of individual members/ staff. Litigation costs and consequences when Council initiates action.	Decisions or lack of action challenged. Complaints. Meetings not conducted lawfully. Decisions made outwith the powers of the Council. Breach of employment law. Actions initiated by Council -including legal action leading to unknown or unexpected costs.	Possible/Major High risk overall	All resolutions are minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings, Clerk ensures appropriate powers are available. Use of delegated powers only after councillor consultation Insurance cover. Membership of professional bodies and networks. Use of professional advisers when specialist or legal advice required including when considering legal action.	Written Job Descriptions and Contracts for all staff Complaints Policy Insurance policies Staffing Committee Scheme of Delegation	Consider vexatious complaints policy Councillors to consider updating own training periodically
4) Health and Safety, Asset management	Personal injury and/or legal claim on the Council from members of the	possible/ major High Risk overall	Village hall repairs completed 2020 Council Insurance includes public liability insurance.	Village hall annual and periodic checks Annual inspection report	Confirm risk assessments in place for all current activity and trustees/ staff

Risk of injury from Council or associated Charity assets or as part of organised or approved Council activities	public, employees or others. Closure of key assets (eg Cemetery, Village Hall, play equipment) due to poor planning or management.		Annual review of risk register (safety of said assets should also be checked and reported). Annual safety report of play equipment. Periodic visual checks of play equipment and other assets. All new activities should be accompanied with Risk Assessment and checked with insurers. Contractors have insurance/licenses.	Safety inspection checklists (play equipment, cemetery) Asset register Insurance policies Risk assessments for organised activities Insurance policies COVID incorporated into risk assessments and checklists Annual tree survey/ urgent works	roles in overseeing and implementing. Review management arrangements for Village Hall- include users? Identify and act on priority maintenance (play equipment) Review safety of items on asset register Ongoing work to plan for Cemetery extension.
5) Failure to deliver residents expectations	The work of the Council may be misunderstood leading to negative feedback or dissatisfaction. Problems with stakeholder management/ liaison with relevant statutory bodies when APC is not empowered to act.	Possible/Minor Low risk overall	Local Borough and County Councillors are invited to meetings All Councillors are active members of the community, and use a range of methods to keep abreast of residents' opinions and concerns. Neighbourhood Plan has allowed for consultation with residents. Community Showcase March 2023 provided opportunity to update residents and build links with community groups, leading to establishment of new environmental group.	Public participation at every meeting Ardleigh Advertiser articles, inviting feedback Neighbourhood Plan documentation including meetings, consultation and web/ social media updates. Social media channels (@ardleighpc, @ardleighnp, Ardleigh.website) Social media policy adopted Nov 2022	Increase use of Councillor emails- see below. Consider strategic/ longer term plan for Council Provide periodic opportunities to showcase the work of the Council and current concerns and to seek feedback.
6) Business Continuity eg during periods of lockdown or loss of key people.	Single points of failure should Clerk or Chair be incapacitated or where only one person has access to records or detailed knowledge.	Possible/moderate Medium risk overall	Electronic records are kept of key documents and processes, these are held securely on shared drives or uploaded to website. Scheme of delegation in place Direct debits set up for most utilities.	Standing Orders Financial regulations Minutes of relevant meetings Scheme of delegation and electronic list of emergency decisions.	Update scheme of delegation to allow smooth running of all functions between meetings including unexpected decisions.

	All online payments are processed by Clerk. All cemetery matters managed by Chair.		Membership of relevant bodies to seek guidance (eg ICCM for Cemetery, RCCE/ACRE for Village Hall)	Appointment of Deputy Clerk and use of shared mailboxes for outward/public- facing activities.	Consider setting up bank standing orders for basic salary and other contractual requirements. Consider some form of succession planning to share knowledge.
7) Inadequate records management. Data breaches or loss of data.	Breach of FOI or data protection legislation. Loss of records or access to key online documents or emails. Running out of storage . Councillors required to disclose personal emails in light data subject request. Non compliance with latest governance guidance about use of personal email addresses.	Possible/moderate Medium risk overall	Office 365 for email with sharepoint used for electronic files - offsite Regular backups taken of these through Cloudy IT who can provide back-up and training support as required. .gov.uk domains for Council emails and used by some councillors for 2022-23.	Website holds all key policies and documents including agendas and minutes GDPR policy Council registered with the ICO FOI policy published Key passwords held by Clerk and kept secure Declaration signed by councillors 2023 for use of personal email or devices.	Improvements to IT systems, security and training though partnership with Cloudy IT. Further (all?) councillors and staff to complete GDPR online basic training. Review accessibility of website to ensure compliance. More (ideally all) councillors to consider making use of dedicated emails for Council business.
8) Changes to legislation or Local Plan which impact on Ardleigh or functioning of its Parish Council. Significant infrastructure	Plans and activities or ability to influence impacted by factors which are outside the control of the Council. Changes to the powers of Parish Councils or the 'shape' of Ardleigh.	Possible/ moderate Medium risk overall	Regular updates from other tiers of Local Government and NALC. Consideration of / engagement with Local Plan and Garden Community at full Parish Council meetings. Development of Neighbourhood Plan to assist with defining any development needs of the Parish.	Minutes of meetings Neighbourhood Plan preparations and feedback NALC and other briefings Local and regional campaign activities and meetings.	Keep abreast of and feed into plans for Colchester/ Tendring Borders Garden Community. Active engagement in regional campaigns and provide local meetings and awareness raising sessions (alongside promotion and

changes of other external events which impact on our Parish.		 	Engagement with regional or national campaigns as appropriate (eg Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons)		updates using Council media channels)

		CONSEQUENCES – WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM REASONABLE CONSEQUENCE				
		Insignificant	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Catastrophic**
LIKELIHOOD RATING	Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Key borrowed from https://www.guidelinesforgirlguides.org.au/managers_handbook/applying-risk-management-approach/risk-assessment-management/