

Harescombe Parish Council

Health and Safety Policy and Council Risk Assessment

Adopted- March 2026

Review by March 2027

Harescombe Parish Council is committed to undertaking its duties and other activities in accordance with Health and Safety Legislation, and other legislative and official requirements, in order to deliver its services safely and effectively. The council is ultimately responsible for management of the risks associated with its functions, and it is supported by the clerk in delivering a safe and efficient workplace alongside service delivery to its local community.

The council provides very limited facilities and services to its local community and has just one part-time employee, namely the clerk who is also the responsible financial officer. As the council has less than 5 employees, there is no requirement for a written Health and Safety Policy. Nevertheless, adherence to effective Health and Safety good practice is essential. Therefore, the council has decided it is good practice to have a document which includes risk identification, assessment and mitigation management for activities as undertaken by, and on behalf of the council. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the primary legislation under which Health and Safety considerations are undertaken. Other legislation will also apply.

Unmanaged risk threatens the council's ability to successfully achieve its aims and objectives. Whilst it is almost impossible to eliminate all risk, it is possible to reduce the likelihood of risk, and to mitigate against the consequences of that risk. Risk management is an integral part of the efficient discharge of the council's duties and responsibilities to its employee, volunteers and the wider community.

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Risk Management

INSURANCE

Risk Description	Risk Likelihood	Risk Impact	Measures Taken and Mitigation Controls
Damage to third party property or injury to individuals.	L	H	Public Liability Insurance is in place and a check at renewal on levels of cover, is undertaken to ensure financial cover is adequate
Protection of Council Properties and equipment	M	M	Appropriate levels of cover are in place for all major fixed assets listed on the Parish Council Asset Register. These include defibrillator and cabinet, the clerk's laptop, and some winter grit bins. Asset checks are undertaken to satisfy insurers requirements, should a claim need to be made.
Insolvency of insurance company	L	M	Council uses one of the largest companies providing specialist cover for Local Councils.
Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	H	References are obtained and 'right to work' established prior to appointment of employees. The clerk is in possession of an enhanced DBS check. Annual reviews of staff performance. Fidelity Guarantee in contracts of employment. Fidelity insurance. Effective Control Measures are in place and regularly reviewed. Adherence to regularly reviewed policies and procedures
Personal Accident to Members and Officers Assault to Officers Libel and Slander Officials Indemnity	L	H	Compulsory Employers Liability Insurance is in place. Insurance is to cover employees, councillors and volunteers. Levels of cover are reviewed at renewal. The clerk, councillors and any volunteers are to be adequately trained to undertake any tasks they are required to do.

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AREAS OF SELF MANAGED RISK

Risk Description	Risk Likelihood	Risk Impact	Measures Taken and Mitigation Controls
Damage to, and safety of fixed assets as listed on the Parish Council Asset Register.	L	H	A schedule of frequency of inspection, results of findings and action required and taken forms part of the asset register. Defibrillator, defibrillator cabinet and the clerk's laptop are to be undertaken every 2 months. All other assets are checked at least annually, or more often if deficiencies are highlighted. Any necessary reports are to be submitted to the council by the clerk.
Unwanted visitors entering building during meetings & disturbance by member of public.	L	M	Procedures are in place to deal with this are detailed within the Council's Standing Orders.
Safety of officers and councillors at work or when lone-working	L	M	Clerk and councillors to ensure that a third party is aware if they are working alone whilst undertaking council business. The council must provide a safe place of work. Equally, workers must take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions, and comply with the council's requirements for managing health and safety. Appropriate bespoke risk assessments should be undertaken for any activities undertaken in such circumstances.
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring members' interests, gifts and hospitality received	L	H	Register of Interest Declarations have been signed, published on the parish council website and forwarded to CDC Monitoring Officer. Council adheres to the Code of Conduct Disclosure of interests is a standing agenda item as a reminder to members.
Adoption of, and adherence to the Code of Conduct	L	H	Code of Conduct has been adopted by the council. NB – Declarations of Interest are the responsibility of individual Councillors.
Keeping proper financial records in accordance with statutory requirements	M	H	NALC Model Financial Regulations have been adapted and adopted. They to be reviewed annually. Clerk / RFO holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). Regular scrutiny of financial records through bank reconciliation and internal controls. Appropriate approval (2 councillor authorisers) of pending expenditure. Annual appointment of an internal auditor who is competent and independent of the council. Records kept in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations and JPAG Practitioners Guide.

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Security of banking arrangements	M	M	Regular bank reconciliations with an associated internal controls checklist. These are undertaken by the clerk and a councillor who is not primarily involved in the payment approval process. Annual independent internal audit by an individual who is competent and independent of the council. All payments to be made in accordance with Financial Regulations
Failure of IT hardware and software systems	M	M	Virus protection with regular updates. Password protected computer. Regular data back-up to password protected USB drive which is held in a separate location. Chairman holds passwords in a sealed envelope for use in the case of the clerk becoming incapacitated
Loss of income for the need to provide essential services	L	M	Appropriate, annually reviewed and agreed levels of general and earmarked reserves. The precept is reviewed annually alongside an approved budget. The council has no forms of income other than the precept.
Ensuring adequacy of annual precept	L	M	Approval of budget by full Council. Regular budget monitoring and review of general and earmarked reserves. Ensure the precept requirement is submitted to Stroud District Council by 31 st January each year.
Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers applicable to local council	L	M	Clerk / RFO reviews all business activities for legal compliance and also ensures there is a 'power to spend' for all council purchase activities.
Complying with restrictions on borrowing	L	L	Borrowing approval authorised by the council will be in-line with current restrictions and council financial regulations. Guidance would be sought from NALC & GAPTC
Ensuring proper compliance with controlled spending under s137 LGA.	L	M	Items paid under Section 137 are reported in the minutes and as a separate column in the cash book. S137 LGA 1972 is only to be used as a power of last resort and within the financial limits as determined by the number of electors, and annual elector limit. Annual payment ceiling for s137 is listed in the cashbook heading. The council will use the General Power of Competence where appropriate
Meeting timetables as laid down when responding to consultation invitations, including commenting on planning applications	L	M	Planning applications are circulated to councillors on receipt in the clerk's email inbox. If an application is deemed to be contentious or in-depth, Standing Orders allow for an extraordinary meeting to be called within the 21-day statutory consultee period to consider the application.

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Proper, timely and accurate reporting of Council business in minutes	L	M	Minutes properly numbered for ease of reference. Draft minutes published on website within one month. Approved minutes circulated and published on website.
Failure to respond to electors wishing to exercise their rights of inspection	L	M	Advertising end of year accounts and made available for inspection to the public as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Notice of Rights publication details and copy signed and sent to the external auditor. Electors' rights are published on the noticeboards and website in accordance with required timescales
Document control – correspondence, postage, storage and filing, etc	L	M	Documentation is stored in accordance with the documentation policy. Documents are backed up onto an encrypted USB drive and stored in a separate location. The production and storage of physical documents is restricted as far as possible with the preference being digitally stored documentation.