

ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION.

All of us face hazards. We identify these hazards and assess their severity and the likelihood, or risk, of their happening. If the severity and likelihood are both low, we probably choose to ignore the hazard. If either or both are high we take action to avoid or mitigate the hazard. The St Neot Parish Council (PC) faces similar issues on behalf of its parishioners, similarly needs to take action, and does so as explained below.

2. AIM.

The aim of this document is to explain to parishioners and other interested parties how the PC identifies hazards, takes steps to avoid them or to minimize their effects, and makes its activities public. It also serves as an aide memoire to PC members of their responsibilities toward Risk Management.

3. OBJECTIVES.

The objectives of the PC's Risk Management processes are to:

- Raise awareness of the need for Risk Management amongst councillors, employees and parishioners;
- Identify any hazards;
- Estimate the risk that any such hazard will occur;
- Based on the above, decide if preventative action is necessary, and if so what that should be;
- Take into account all relevant rules and regulations, codes of practice, and guidance on instruction and training - for councillors and employees alike;
- Carry out the necessary action;
- Tell all people involved what has been done (e.g. on the Council website);
- Record the process;
- Review and revise the process if necessary.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

- The Chairman is responsible for directing and guiding councillors and other stakeholders in the process of Risk Management. She or he is to abide by the regulations etc. discussed in paragraph 5 below, and promote such compliance by the Council as a whole.
- The Clerk is to record and implement councillors' decisions in the area of Risk Management. She or he is also the designated Responsible Financial Officer, responsible in the first instance for the operation of the Council's finances, and protecting them from fraud, mismanagement, cyber, and other risks.
- Councillors are collectively responsible for Risk Management, from time to time carrying out specific duties such as the inspection of assets, production of documents, and any *ad hoc* task assigned by the Chairman
- Employees, Volunteers and Contractors are required to carry out the tasks designated by the PC in accordance with its requirements and with all national and local legislation related to Health and Safety and Risk Management.
- Parishioners are expected and encouraged to behave in a risk-averse manner, with due regard for other members of the community. They are also requested to report to the PC any risk-related issues about which the PC could take remedial action.

5. MEASURES USED IN RISK MANAGEMENT

The PC uses the following measures:

- Regular meetings. The PC holds monthly meetings of the full Council except in August, emergency meetings if needed, and meetings as required of the Planning and Finance Committees. There are also frequent *ad hoc* meetings of sub-groups for purposes such as drafting orders, managing assets, gardening, street clearing etc. If any potential hazard is identified at such meetings, it is to be considered whether remedial action, including if necessary a formal Risk Assessment, is indicated.
- Standing Orders. PCs are required to draw up, review, amend if needed, and publish Standing Orders, within which any potential risk is to be considered.
- Code of Conduct. Councillors must obey a Code of Conduct in particular with regard to financial affairs. This minimizes associated risks.
- Regulations. The PC must conform to a variety of Local Government Acts, in particular those of 1972 and 2000. The Accounts and Audits Regulations 2015 contain references to Risk Management, and the duties of the Responsible Financial Officer in respect of financial risks.
- Audits, internal and external. Annual audits are carried out and published on the council website.
- Financial regulations and controls. Several measures control financial risks. Principal among these are the Internal Financial Controls, Financial Regulations and Income and Expenditure Analysis, all of which are published on the council website.
- The Council maintains an Asset Register that lists all the assets which the PC owns or for which it is responsible. This, and its regular inspections, are published on the website. This minimizes risks related to assets, for instance with play and exercise equipment.
- Risk Assessments. In addition to the largely informal measures above, the PC carries out and publishes formal Risk Assessments as required. (Recent examples, related to Covid-19, may be found on the Council website.) These follow a structured approach comprising the following steps:
 - Identification of potential hazards;
 - Determination of risk of the hazards' actually occurring;
 - Identification of actions needed to eliminate or mitigate hazards;
 - Implementation of actions;
 - Recording of findings;
 - Review and revisions as needed;
 - Publication of the actions carried out.

6. CONCLUSION

The above summary shows that the St Neot Parish Council takes Risk Management seriously and has established and implemented many measures to eliminate or mitigate hazards.

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