

## STOWUPLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Windmill Lodge, Mill Road, Buxhall, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3DS

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### Parish Risk Assessment

**Purpose of Document:** To enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and to satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise the risks. This will enable the Council to make an adequate declaration in its Annual Return to the external auditors.

The risks have been divided into a number of categories and for each category the actions necessary to mitigate the risks including an annual Parish Risk Assessment, are recorded.

### Financial Controls and Management

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

The Council's adopted **Financial Regulations** are reviewed annual by the Parish Council. The Financial Regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and are updated as necessary on the advice of the parish clerk (Senior Responsible Officer) and to comply with amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. The Council's Financial Regulations are designed to demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and should be read as an integral part of this risk assessment.

### Risks:

The risks are identified in the Parish Council's Risk Assessment document. The document is reviewed annually.

### Governance & Accountability

The Finance and Policy Committee review the latest "**Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide**" when notified of changes via SALC.

### Standing Orders

The Council's adopted **Standing Orders** are reviewed annually by the Council.

## **Non-Financial Risks**

### **As Employer**

#### **Risks:**

The Council employs part-time workers. The Council faces risks if we do not comply fully with employment and health and safety at work legislation and regulations.

#### **Mitigation:**

- All employees are insured for third party risks.
- All employees have standard contracts of employment setting out pay and conditions, duties and responsibilities, which are reviewed annually.
- The Council provides appropriate protective clothing and equipment as necessary.
- The Council ensures that employees have the necessary training and skills to carry out their duties in a safe manner.
- The Council carries out a review of the risk assessment for each employee as part of the annual Parish Risk Assessment.

### **Harm to Third Parties**

The Council undertakes regular visual inspections of the condition of its equipment to ensure that its health and safety obligations are met and 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 in event of accident and the Council found to be in default of its duties.

### **Play Park**

#### **Risks:**

Health and safety of users and visitors to the Play Park involving the equipment, seating, litter bins, fencing, gates, trees, hedges and grass cutting.

#### **Mitigation:**

- An annual inspection is carried out by an independent professional and when new equipment is provided.
- Visual inspections carried out throughout the year.
- Public liability insurance cover in place.
- Prompt action taken to make repairs when notified through the annual and visual inspections or more informal reports of damage.
- Regular programme of maintenance involving grass cutting, hedge trimming, tree surgery when necessary and of the equipment.

## **The Cemetery**

### **Risks:**

- Gravestones leaning, Memorial Wall and the War Memorial not maintained.
- Trees and hedges not maintained.
- Benches, gates and fencing not maintained.
- Shed security and the risks to the equipment from theft and damage.

### **Mitigation:**

- Running of cemetery overseen by Cemetery Officer.
- Public Liability insurance cover in place.
- Regular maintenance programme for trees, hedges and grass cutting.
- Gravestones subject to an annual 'topple test'.
- Visual inspection of gravestones, Memorial Wall, War Memorial, Cemetery Shed, benches, gates and fences. Prompt repairs carried out when necessary.

## **Holy Trinity Churchyard**

### **Risks:**

- Gravestones leaning.
- Gravestones and monument fall into disrepair.
- Trees, hedges and grass cutting maintenance programmes lapse.

### **Mitigation:**

- Gravestones subject to annual 'topple test'.
- Maintenance of churchyard overseen by Cemetery Officer.
- Regular maintenance programme for trees, hedges and grass cutting in place.
- Visual inspections of churchyard and prompt action taken on repairs when damage etc. reported.
- Public liability insurance cover in place.

## **Allotments**

### **Risks:**

- Health and safety of users and visitors to the allotments involving gates, trees and hedges.

### **Mitigation:**

- All Tenants should consider Public Liability and/or Property insurance for their plots. The Parish Council will not be held responsible for any loss on the allotment.
- Regular inspections.
- Plot holders on the front row responsible for trimming back hedges. All plot holders responsible for cutting paths between plots and keeping plots tidy and free of rubbish.

## **Other Assets**

The Council owns a number of other assets in public areas. All the assets are recorded in the Asset Register which is available on the Parish website and reviewed annually.

### **Risks:**

- Assets in public areas are at risk from vandalism and accidental damage.
- Assets in public areas or used by the public may constitute a danger if not properly maintained.

### **Mitigation:**

- Public liability cover maintained.
- Grass cutting contracts in place for the Green areas.
- Visual inspection of trees on the Village Green, in the cemetery, in the Churchyard and at the allotments carried out annually.
- Tree surgery carried out by qualified contractors as necessary to trees in public areas.
- Future programme to be developed to maintain the public areas in the village to ensure a safe and attractive environment.
- Public Liability cover provided for volunteers engaged on tasks for the Council.
- Specific insurance cover is also taken out for Community Events.

## **Miscellaneous Risks**

### **Risks:**

- Council leaves itself open to criticism by residents and possible legal action if complaints not dealt with speedily and openly.
- Council open to criticism by residents and others if grants and applications for funding are not dealt with in a transparent and fair manner.
- Council open to criticism if requests under the “Freedom of Information Act” not dealt with within specified timescales.
- Council open to criticism if requests under the “Subject Access Request (SAR)” not dealt with within specified timescales.
- Council open to criticism if not compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation.

### **Mitigation:**

- Formal Code of practice for handling complaints in place and adhered to.
- Council issues separate forms for applications for funding under and over £500. All application forms are considered by full Council.
- Council issues separate applications for funding made under Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). All application forms considered by the Council’s PIIP Committee who then make recommendations to the full Council.
- Council adheres to an agreed policy for dealing with “Freedom of Information” requests.
- Council hosted email accounts are in place.
- Council adheres to an agreed privacy policies for dealing with “General Data Protection Regulation”
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