

## **Annual review of risk management**

Nailstone Parish Council (the PC) is required to undertake a risk assessment, and to review it at least annually (Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014; Governance and Accountability for Local Councils A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2018).

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the PC to provide a service to the public during and after a period of disaster. The PC has a statutory duty to develop a business continuity plan for all of the public functions that it provides.

### **a) Activities of the Parish Council**

The PC is a landowner, and is responsible for Church Meadow, and for the children's play equipment, seats, gazebo, memorials, trees and flower beds within it.

The PC is responsible for the maintenance of the closed churchyard.

The PC carries out works on land which it owns and on land owned by others, arranges for work to be carried out by volunteers, and also engages contractors to carry out works and to supply goods and services.

The PC owns or is responsible for items of street furniture and equipment.

The PC is an employer, and must therefore take out employer's liability insurance (Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969).

The PC deals with money, and holds public money on trust. The PC is required to take a security for employees who deal with money, though this need not be in the form of fidelity insurance (Local Government Act 1972, s114).

The PC carries on the business of local government, which includes holding public meetings, managing a website, and publishing a parish newsheet, minutes, reports and other material.

The PC holds and maintains important public documents and records.

### **b) Insured risks**

Nailstone PC holds maintains appropriate cover through a standard local council policy with Gallagher Insurance. This policy includes cover for public liability, employers liability, money and personal injury.

### **c) Risks managed by the Parish Council**

Acting *ultra vires*. All expenditure must be lawful. The PC adopted the Power of General Competence on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023; this power will expire in May 2027. The Parish Clerk must hold an approved qualification when this power is adopted. The PC holds recent editions of administration and best practice guides; also covered by membership of LRALC & NALC which are indemnified to offer legal advice. Members and the Clerk must not enter into any arrangements or agreements which could be interpreted as bribery.

Land and property controlled by asset register, regular inspections and maintenance, index-linking of insurance cover, insurance held by contractors and sub-contractors. Safety considerations and risk assessments are an integral part of all projects and work plans.

Voluntary activities are tailored to the age and experience of the volunteers involved, and are usually supervised by experienced personnel. Training may be provided through external courses as appropriate.

The children's play equipment is inspected weekly, and a written record kept. The Councillor responsible for this has resigned, and a volunteer is being sought and will be offered training. The equipment is also inspected annually by a RoSPA Inspector.

A survey of the monuments in the closed churchyard has been inaugurated, and a report is to be prepared for the Annual Meeting in May.

Serious illness or death of Clerk or Chairman would cause disruption, but established procedures and reports should enable new appointee to take over quickly. The Chairman holds access details and passwords for all PC accounts in a sealed envelope..

Election called to fill casual vacancy, or Parish Poll called by Parish Meeting. Costs covered by reserve funds.

Cyber crime. The Council uses on-line banking services which are subject to limits. Invoices must be approved before payment is made. Website subversion or infiltration would be rectified by the host. The website could be shut down without any effect on the day to day operation of the PC; a new website is being designed.

Ransomware. Computer could be shut down and replaced without serious loss.

Computer malfunction. Real-time backup to cloud. All important documents are stored as hard copy.

Total destruction of documents by (say) fire. Financial records for current and previous financial year could be reconstituted from copies of minutes on website.

A review of documents and their storage and preservation is to be carried out when a permanent Clerk has been appointed.

Public litigation - complaints dealt with promptly in accordance with published procedure. Council business administered in accordance with current best practice. A Complaints Policy is to be prepared.

Failure of grounds maintenance or other contractor – temporary management by volunteers and urgent appointment of new contractor by PC.

Newsletter – published monthly. Copies are deposited at the British Library (Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003).

**d) Unmanaged risks**

Bank deposits. Deposits of up to £75,000 made by small local councils (defined as having an annual budget of less than 500,000 euros) are now covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Consequential loss of income would not be a factor for Nailstone PC. Business interruption and terrorism are not insured. Consideration will be given to opening an additional bank account when the Community Benefit Funding from the Stones Hollow Solar Farm is received.

**e) Risk assessments**

A comprehensive risk assessment has been prepared for the Nailstone Gardening Group.

Specific risk assessments are carried out before public events and project works, and identify the different activities and risks involved in each project.

Risks are evaluated using the RoSPA formula of probability multiplied by severity (each on a scale of 1-5), which yield the following ratings:

1-3	very low risk	monitor
4-7	low risk	monitor and reduce if possible
8-12	medium risk	reduce if possible
13-20	high risk	implement control measures asap
21+	unacceptable risk	stop activity, take immediate action

The Parish Council may allow a volunteer to use his or her own power tools at their own risk where appropriate, but will ensure that any such operator is briefed on the project and site conditions, and has a clear area in which to work. No volunteer may use a power tool belonging to another person.

**f) Parish Council risk review calendar**

January

- Annual Finance Meeting
- Review of risk management
- Review of internal financial control
- Donations and budgets of community groups
- Membership of organisations

- Review of salaries
- Review of direct debit agreements
- Appointment of internal auditor
- Budget agreed
- Precept set

**April**

- Receipt & Payments accounts made up for approval; checked by Chairman; compliance checked by Internal Auditor
- Summary financial statement prepared for previous financial year
- Review of insurance policy

**May**

- Annual Meeting
  - Chairman’s declaration of acceptance of office
  - Inventory checked
  - Report on safety of monuments in closed churchyard
  - Report on condition of all Council property
  - Statement of fixed assets
  - Annual report prepared for Council approval
  - Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) approved and signed
- Parish organisations report

Other reviews	Frequency	Last review	Next review
Ground maintenance contracts	3 and 2-yearly	Oct 2023	Oct 2026
Pensions Review	3 yearly	?	
Elections	4-yearly	May 2023	May 2027
Financial regulations	5-yearly	May 2019	May 2024
Emergency plan	?		

**g) Parish Council business continuity plan**

The PC has made reasonable arrangements to ensure that its operations would not be compromised by a local or national disaster.

**This Report was prepared for a meeting of Nailstone Parish Council on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024**