

Introduction

Middleton St. George Parish Council recognises the importance of Risk Management in order to maintain the ability to deliver the activities/ services which are given in its Mission Statement. Risk Management is a factor that enables the Council to satisfy its objective to deliver high quality public services.

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Parish Council to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. The Parish Council has taken all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

The policy:

- Identifies the areas to be reviewed
- Identifies what the risk may be
- Evaluates the management and control of the risk and record all findings
- Review, assess and revise the policy and risk assessments.

1. What is Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies.

Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standard of conduct and service delivery arrangements (Audit Commission)

Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety but applies to all aspects of the Council's work.

2. Mission Statement and Key Objectives of Middleton St George Parish Council

The Parish Council is committed to maintaining Middleton St. George as a separate village with an active life of its own and working to improve the quality of life for parishioners.

Key Objectives

- To engage, whenever possible, in an open dialogue with residents, to understand their needs, and to explain how the Council will address these needs within the resources and powers available.
- To understand the issues and aspirations of residents and promote these ideals for the future.
- To facilitate greater parishioner engagement in parish matters.

- To enable, assist and encourage other local organisations and agencies to provide services.
- To promote and represent the best interests of the village for the betterment of the local community.
- To encourage and promote social and community values in the village by working in co-operation and supporting, where practicable, local organisations and groups.
- To embrace progress, improve the quality of life and support healthy living.
- To improve the management and governance of the Parish Council.

3. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, employees, contractors or others who may be carrying out operations for and on behalf of the Council, and those who may be affected by their work.

4. Responsibility for Risk Management

Responsibility for effective Risk Management rests with all Members of the Council.

Members have ultimate responsibility for Risk Management as risks threaten the achievement of policy objectives. In the context of Risk Management Members:

- exercise leadership,
- consider and adopt current and future risk management policies and strategies, and
- support and monitor the risk management process.

The Chairman has overall responsibility for securing adherence to the Council's policy on Risk Management.

5. Risk Management Policy Statement

The Risk management Policy of the Council is to be fully committed to effective Risk Management, adopting best practices in the identification, evaluation and control of risks, in order to:

- integrate risk management into the culture of the Council,
- eliminate or reduce risks to an acceptable level,
- anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements,
- prevent injury and damage and reduce the cost of risk, and
- raise awareness of the need for Risk Management.

6. Approach to Risk Management

The Council's approach to Risk Management is that that all risks it faces are systematically identified, assessed and managed in the most cost effective manner within overall resources available.

Each risk identified by the Council is recorded in the Risk Register which is attached to this Policy Statement. The impact is assessed and appropriate control measures are put in place.

The level of risk is judged by the likelihood of it occurring and the effect on the Council. The following matrix has been used to assess the risks.

Likelihood	Highly likely (3)	Medium (3)	High (6)	High (9)
	Possible (2)	Low (2)	Medium (4)	High (6)
	Unlikely (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)
		Negligible (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe(3)
		Impact		

Judgement of the level of risk may rely on past experience or a specific assessment of a particular instance, or both. The Council will determine whether a risk is acceptable in all the circumstances.

The responsibility for ensuring that the policy is adhered to rest with the Council's Chairman.

7. Review of the Policy and Risk Assessments

This policy and the risk assessments which accompany it will be reviewed on an annual basis at the September meeting of the Parish Council.

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
1. Business Continuity	1. Council not being able to continue its business due to unexpected or tragic circumstances including the incapacity of the Clerk	Designate a person to temporarily act as Clerk in an emergency Ensure adequate documentation is in place to allow a councillor to be temporarily appointed as Clerk. Appoint a councillor as Clerk to be familiar with all aspects of financial matters. Check Fidelity Guarantee insurance.	2	1	Ensure that existing Clerk updates and passes and explains codes, financial records and files, records and files to the Chairman. Review the appointment. Should the PC need to call in someone to act as Clerk in an emergency, a Clerk from a neighbouring Parish Council will be contacted to act in the role temporarily.	1. Monthly. 2. Annually	Clerk and Chairman
	2. Council not being able to continue in its current form due to a pandemic e.g. Covid-19	Designate a co-ordinator. Follow Government guidance. Carry out risk assessments on the Parish Council work and access to buildings and property to determine the extent to which work can continue or parts which must be temporarily suspended. Agree how the Parish Council and community will respond following discussions with groups. Agree restricted use/closure arrangements for the Council building and Water Park with hirers, and the Parish Council facilities MUGA, Play Area, Playing Field, and The Front, Middleton One Row. Agree that the Clerk will work from home. Agree the work situation with and payment for the Litter Picker and	3	3		Annually or when a pandemic is imminent.	Clerk and Chairman

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
1. Business Continuity		<p>Cleaner and communicate this to the Litter Picker and Cleaner.</p> <p>Communicate the decisions and arrangements to the community using website, Facebook and notice boards.</p> <p>If buildings and facilities are to be closed designate personnel to insert padlocks and notices.</p> <p>Agree the form Parish Council meetings will be held – Remote or In Person.</p> <p>Communicate the Parish Council meeting arrangements including access arrangements to the community using the website, Facebook page and the Noticeboard.</p>	3	3		Annually or when a pandemic is imminent.	Clerk and Chairman
	3. Resumption of Parish Council services following a pandemic e.g. Covid-19	<p>Following Government guidance.</p> <p>If the decision is to re-open the Water Park discuss and agree a date with the hirers and confirm this in writing.</p> <p>Review all risk assessments and amend as necessary.</p> <p>If the decision is to re-open the MUGA, play area and playing field designate personnel to remove the padlocks and insert signage giving the health and safety measures for using the facilities.</p>	4	6		Annually or when a pandemic is imminent	Clerk and Chairman

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
1. Business Continuity		<p>Communicate the decisions and the health and safety measures to the community by the website and Facebook page.</p> <p>Discuss the amended risk assessments and health and safety measures with the Litter Picker and Cleaner and make arrangements for PPE including the protective equipment to be supplied to them.</p> <p>Agree a re-starting date with the Litter Picker and Cleaner and confirm the starting date and measures to protect their health and safety. Supply them with their risk assessments and guidance to protect their health and safety.</p> <p>Decide if remote meetings should continue or if in person meetings can be held.</p> <p>Communicate the decision to the community using the website, Facebook page and notice boards.</p> <p>If remote meetings are to continue, communicate the access arrangements to the community.</p> <p>If in person meetings can be held, put in place social distancing measures and communicate this to the community.</p>					

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
1. Business Continuity	4. Loss of Chairman of the Parish Council	Vice Chairman to act as Chairman until a Special Parish Council meeting is called. New Chairman elected at the Special Parish Council meeting. Induction of new Chairman. Training course for new Chairman	2	1		1. When it occurs. 2. Annually	Clerk and Vice Chairman
	5. Council records - Electronic	The Parish Council's electronic records including the financial accounts are stored on the Council's lap top. The electronic records are backed up each month to an external hard drive. If the Parish Council's email fails due to external reasons the Clerk will use his own email address until the system is restored and Councillors and other bodies will be informed of the changes.	2	1		1. Monthly 2. Report to Parish Council quarterly	Clerk
	6 Council records - Paper	The Parish Council's records are stored at the Clerk's home and in a locked filing cabinet in the Parish Council office.	1	1		1. Monthly 2. Report to Parish Council annually	Clerk
	7. Loss or theft of records	All old copies of Minutes prior to electronic use are deposited with the County Records. All minutes from Jan 2014 are held on the Council's the Council website	1	1	No action required. Check that minutes on website can be accessed. Report to webhost if faults found Report to be made to the	None Every six months.	Clerk Clerk

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
1. Business Continuity					Chairman (and Chair of Finance Committee, where applicable)		
	6. Failure to retain or secure the necessary number of members to form the Council	Maintain an up to date attendance register. Advertise for an election immediately a vacancy exists. Co-opt members where no election held	2	1	Attendance register to be maintained	At every meeting	Clerk
	7. Complaint against the Parish Council (including any which may lead to adverse publicity)	The Parish Council has a Complaints Procedure to address complaints about the Council's action or inaction on a matter, processes, procedures or standard of service. All complaints are reported to the Parish Council meeting. Should the full Parish Council agree that the matter should be referred to Darlington Borough Council for investigation, no further comments to be made until the investigation has been completed. However, if the complaint is not of this nature, but it concerns a particular councillor, this may be a Code of Conduct matter, and is referred to the Monitoring Officer.	2	2		When a complaint arises	Clerk

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
2. To ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Council's financial regulations and code of conduct.	1. Lack of knowledge of regulations and codes	Ensure that all councillors have copies of relative acts, Code of Conduct and Standing orders. Highlight essential parts and provide training where possible.	1	1	Issue electronic copies to new councillors and check that existing councillors have copies with highlighted parts and carry out training	1. When new councillors are elected/co-opted. 2. Six months.	Clerk, Chairman and Councillors
	2. Standing Orders	Ensure Standing Orders are understood by councillors and reviewed at least once per year.	1	1	Issue electronic copies to new councillors.	1. When new councillors are elected/co-opted. 2. Annually	Clerk, Chairman and Councillors
	3 Actions by the PC outside its powers laid down by Parliament	Ensure that all councillors including new councillors have copies of relative acts. Highlight essential parts of Acts or summarise and provide training. Review annually and update information.	3	1	No further action.	1. Parish Council meetings. 2. Annually	Clerk, Chairman and Councillors
	4 Lack of commitment to regulations and procedures	Regular reference to appropriate regulations in agenda items. Delegation of responsibilities to individual councillors.	1	1	Review Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation annually.	1. Parish Council meetings. 2. Annually	Clerk and Councillors
	5 Items purchased without proper tendering procedures resulting in accusations of commercial favouritism	Ensure all Councillors including new Councillors are aware of regulations re estimates and full tender procedures. Introduce practice of estimates for all purchases over an approved figure	2	1	Review the estimates and tenders procedures annually as part of the review of the Financial Regulations.	Annually	Clerk, Chairman, Chair of Finance Committee/Finance Coordinator (where applicable) and Councillors

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
2. To ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Council's financial regulations and code of conduct.	6 Payments made without prior approval and adequate control.	Ensure all payments are approved in Council Meetings and recorded in minutes. Cash payments are not to be made.	1	1	Review the method of payments.	1. Parish Council meetings. 2. Annually	Clerk, Chairman, Chair of Finance Committee/Finance Coordinator (where applicable) and Councillors
	7 Lack of control of signatories to cheques	Keep authorised signatories to a practical minimum – Chairman of the Parish Council, Vice Chairman) and Clerk.	1	1	Review the authorised signatories	Annually	Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman and Councillors
	8 VAT not properly accounted for, resulting in over claiming and large demands from HMRC	Ensure publications are held and Clerk has good knowledge of regulations. All items subject to VAT are recorded in the spreadsheet. Agreement of any submitted returns	1	1	Report to Parish Council Notify Chairman (where applicable), of claims made and when payment made.	Quarterly	Clerk
	9 Notice of meeting	A notice of meeting, including the agenda are placed on the notice board in each village, in the folder in Londis and on the Council's website giving the required notice for each meeting	1	1	No further action	At least seven days before the meeting.	Clerk
	10 Approval of minutes	Minutes are approved at the next meeting of the Council. A copy of the minutes is displayed in the village Londis store and Council's website by no later than one week before the meeting.	1	1	No further action	At every meeting	Clerk

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
2. To ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Council's financial regulations and code of conduct.	11 Register of Interests	Members are required to declare an interest in any item of business and this is recorded in the minutes. Completed 'Register of Financial & Other Interest' Forms are submitted to the Monitoring Officer and regularly reviewed.	1	1	No further action	At every meeting and when new Councillors are elected/co-opted	Clerk
	12 Security of Data	Confidential documents are held in a locked cupboard. Confidential documents held on the computer are password protected. The passwords are kept by the Clerk, Chairman of the Parish Council and Chair of Finance Committee (where appl.).	1	1	No further action.		Clerk
	13 Freedom Of Information	The Council has adopted the model scheme and registered this with the Information Commissioner.	1	1	No further action,		Clerk
	14 Non-Compliance with regard to legal and regulatory requirements regarding employees (e.g. contracts, welfare, pension provision, etc.)	The Council has adopted Employee Recruitment Procedures, Welfare and Appraisal Policies As RFO, the Clerk is responsible for staff administration and finance, and will report any issues to the Parish Council so they can be addressed	1	1	Review policies and procedures Staff Appraisals to be carried out Councillors to review salaries and pensions Clerk to report any issues to the Council so they can be addressed	Annually Annually Annually If and when they arise	Clerk/Parish Council Parish Council Parish Council Clerk/Parish Council
3. To identify and regularly review the Council's priorities	1. Lack of knowledge of how to set objectives, set priorities, and identify risks to their achievement	All councillors to be made aware of need for objectives and identification of risk. Attend training sessions.	1	1	Issue copies to new councillors and check that existing councillors have copies with highlighted parts	When new Councillors are elected/co-opted. Six months	Chairman, Clerk and Councillors

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
3. To identify and regularly review the Council's priorities	2. Lack of commitment by council members	Add risk assessment to agenda at least quarterly, reviewing particular items and results against those items.	1	2	No further action.	Quarterly and Annually	Clerk, Chairman and Councillors
	3. No risk analysis carried out.	As at 3.1 above. Ensure that completion of the risk assessment is given high priority, as a requirement of the external auditor and national legislation and regulations. If no Audit risk assessment is undertaken the Parish Council will receive a Qualified Audit report from the external auditors.	1	2	Review risk register.	Quarterly and Annually	Clerk and Councillors
	4. No steps taken to combat identified risks	Add risk assessment to agenda at least annually, reviewing particular items, and results against those items.	1	2	No further action	Annually	Clerk and Councillors
4. To influence Government and other organisations to fulfil the requirements of the Parish population	1. Lack of effective lines of communication with other organisations	Note all communication lines that are essential or beneficial and make information available to Councillors. Establish contacts by name and where possible face-to-face	2	1	Agree and adopt a Policy for Councillor Representation on outside bodies	As and when required. Annually	Clerk and Councillors Clerk and Parish Councillors
	2. Lack of effective lines of communication with residents	Establish the Communications Policy. Take every opportunity to publicise role of Parish Council through Parish website, Facebook page. Effective use of Notice Boards and "fliers". Create Parish plan through the use of	2	1	Review the Communications Policy. Review the effectiveness of the website, Facebook page, noticeboards and fliers. Consider other methods of communication.	Review annually	Clerk and Councillors

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
4. To influence Government and other organisations to fulfil the requirements of the Parish population		parishioners' views from detailed questionnaires and public meetings. Use key issues to raise profile of Parish Council and to test parishioners' views.					
	3. Lack of preparation on subjects requiring influence.	Ensure that all Councillors are aware of need for careful research and are guided as to where to obtain relevant information on issues under discussion	2	1		As required	Clerk and Councillors
	4. Lack of confidence by Parish Councillors	Induction Pack given to new Councillor. Make information available to all councillors Experienced Councillors to assist newcomers to establish contacts Delegate responsibility for specific contacts to individual councillors. Establish training needs for Councillors	1	1	Review induction pack. Review training needs for Councillors	As required	Clerk and Councillors
5. To ensure that all councillors are aware of their responsibilities, possible liabilities and to provide adequate insurance cover for all possible risks	1. Lack of Knowledge of possible culpability of councillors	Creation of Standing Orders and familiarisation with those where greatest risk occurs.	1	1	Review Standing Orders, Assets Registers, Insurance Policies, etc.	As required	Clerk and Councillors

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
5. To ensure that all councillors are aware of their responsibilities, possible liabilities and to provide adequate insurance cover for all possible risks	2. Lack of education of Councillors regarding culpability.	As above plus delegate responsibility to one or two councillors to assist newcomers to understand culpability. Attend any training courses available.	1	1	Review scheme of delegation to senior Councillors to assist new Councillors	When new Councillors are elected/co-opted.	Clerk and Councillors
	3. Inadequate insurance cover taken out - property, personal liability, employers liability.	Review risk assessment by including on agenda of Parish Council meetings at least quarterly. Ensure a risk assessment is carried out for all new assets and appropriate insurance cover considered. Delegate responsibility for keeping up to date with insurance requirements to an individual councillor. Review ins. cover.	3	1	Review insurance	Annually	Clerk and Councillors
6. To keep appropriate books of account accurately and up-to-date throughout the financial year	1. Lack of knowledge of accounting requirements	Ensure all councillors are familiar with current financial regulations and include them in standing orders. Regularly review standing orders. Chair of Finance Committee/Finance Coordinator (where applicable) oversees the financial management of the Parish Council. Two Councillors audit the accounts each quarter	2	1		When new Councillors are elected/co-opted. Review Annually	Clerk and Councillors. Two Councillors elected to carry out quarterly audit
	2. Lack of commitment to accounting requirements	Ensure all Councillors are familiar with current financial regulations, and include them in Standing orders. Regularly review standing orders.	2	1		Monthly Financial Reports. Annual Review of Financial	Clerk and Parish Councillors

Aim	Risk	Existing Controls	Impact of risk either 1,2 or 3	Likelihood of risk 1,2 or 3	Future actions to minimise risk	1. Date to implement actions 2. Review date	Person(s) Responsible
		Clerk produces up to date financial reports at all meetings. Internal and External audit reports to be available to all Councillors and any recommendations acted upon promptly.				Regulations Internal and External Audit Reports to Parish Council	
	3. Bank Charges unnecessarily incurred	All banking and drawing of cheques to be in accordance with Section 5 of Financial Regulations Internal audit to be undertaken quarterly during financial year. Clerk to balance accounts against bank statements monthly and produce accounts and bank statements to every Parish Council meeting.	1	1		Monthly	Clerk