WILLINGALE PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – UPDATED March 2026

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Council to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the employer should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible. Making sure that all employees are made aware of the results of the risk assessment.

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what the risk may be.
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review assess and revise if required.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT				
Subject	**Risk(s) Identified**	**H/M/L**	**Management/Control of Risk**	**Review/ Assess/ Revise**
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected circumstance	L	Temporary Locum Clerk is available via EALC temporary staffing bank whilst a permanent replacement is sought.	Reviewed annually at Annual Council Meeting.
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council regularly receives budget update information and the precept is an agenda item at full Council. At the meeting Council receives a budget update report, including actual position and projected position to end of the year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. The Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Epping Forest District Council.	There is some risk of unexpected expense occurring, but the reserves mitigate this.
	Requirements not submitted to EFDC	L	The Clerk submits this figure to EFDC and informs the Council when the monies are received (approx. April).	Existing procedure considered robust.

Financial records	Inadequate records	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Financial irregularities	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Designated Parish Councillors also have full electronic access to the bank accounts to perform periodic checks under dual control.	Existing procedure considered robust.
	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Parish Council has two bank accounts (current and reserve). The Clerk and three Councillors are signatories (any two to sign).	Existing procedure considered robust.
Bank and banking	Bank mistakes, loss or incorrect charges	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statement arrives, any discrepancies are dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. Designated Parish Councillors also have full electronic access to the bank accounts to perform periodic checks.	Existing procedure considered robust.
	Loss through theft or dishonesty or Electronic Banking Fraud	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Cash received is banked within 3 banking days. There is no petty cash or float. The Council utilises Lloyds Bank which operates a comprehensive dual controls system.	
Reporting and auditing	Information communication	L	All information is produced regularly before each Council meeting with the agenda, discussed and approved at the meeting. The information includes, bank reconciliation, budget update, and a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank. Copies of all invoices received. In between meetings, Councillors are kept fully informed of important developments by E Mail	Existing communication procedure considered robust.
	Compliance	L	The Council's records are subject to annual internal audit, which provides a degree of oversight.	Existing procedure considered robust.
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods invoiced but not supplied	L	Sundry items ordered are confirmed by the Clerk as received and payment raised for approval at PC meeting	Existing procedure adequate.
	Incorrect invoicing	L	At each Council meeting the list of invoices awaiting approval is distributed to Councillors and considered along with the invoices.	Existing procedure considered robust.
	Cheque or bank transfer payable incorrect	L	Council approves the list of requests for payment.	Existing procedure considered robust.
	Unpaid invoices	L/M	Council undertakes very little invoicing, although does need to ensure it is paid for advertising in "What's on in Willingale"	Existing procedure adequate.

Grants and support payable	Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure to go through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate.
Grants receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	The Council receives "grant" monies from Essex County Council for verge-cutting. This is managed via the Clerk invoicing ECC on a timely basis. Some delays have been experienced in receipt of funds, but payment has always been received. Verge cutting is generally not commissioned until funds from ECC are confirmed	Existing procedure adequate
Charges rentals payable	Payments of charges, leases, rentals	L	The Parish Council hires a local hall for council meetings and pays charges on receipt of invoice.	Existing procedure and financial records considered robust.
Value for money.	Work awarded incorrectly	L	Normal Parish Council practice is to seek more than one quotation for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods supplied. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought.	Existing procedure and policy adequate.
Salaries and assoc. costs	Salary paid incorrectly	L	The Clerk has a contract of employment and job description and is employed on a monthly salary. The Clerk submits a detailed expense claim at each council meeting.	Existing appointment and payment system are adequate.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid	L	Councillors submit expense forms to Clerk for verification and then to Council for approval at PC Meeting	Existing procedure adequate.
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	L	Risk is higher in an election year. When an election is due the Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from the District Council for a full election and measures which can be adopted in the event of having a contested election. Historically, elections to the Parish Council have not been required.	Existing procedure adequate.
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	The Council does not charge VAT and the Repayment of VAT is submitted regularly to Customs & Excise in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Existing procedure adequate.
PAYE returns	Submit within time limits	L	The Clerk to the Council uses the online PAYE application for submitting details of earnings known as "Basic PAYE Tools". This approach carries the risk of "single-user" administration but multiple users are not permitted by the system.	Existing procedure adequate.
Legal powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings.	Existing procedure adequate.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Notices/ Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and are displayed according to, and adhere to, the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Business conduct	L	Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chair.	Existing procedure adequate.

Members interests	Conflict of interest	L	Declaration of interests by members is an Agenda Item to remind Councillors of their duty.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Register of Members interests	M	Register of Members Interest forms are reviewed annually by Councillors and submitted to the Clerk for retention.	Members take responsibility to update their Register.
Insurance	Adequacy/Cost	L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for.	Current insurance provision considered adequate
Data protection	Potential disclosure of personal information and/or data hacking	L	The Council is potentially subject to GDPR Regulations. However, aside from its Councillors, the Council does not hold any personal data and thus is considered low risk	Current GDPR policy is considered adequate
Freedom of Information Act	The need to comply with FOIA or requests for disclosure under GDPR could become onerous	L	Given the Council holds no personal data, it is considered unlikely that the Council will face any substantial number of requests for information	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under FOIA or GDPR

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS				
Subject	**Risk(s) Identified**	**H/M/L**	**Management/Control of Risk**	**Review/ Assess/ Revise**
Meeting location	Adequacy, Health & Safety	L	The Parish Council Meetings are held at the Village Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspects.	Existing location adequate.
	Village Hall unavailable due to damage by fire/water etc.	L	Consider the use of other premises in the village or in surrounding villages if none available	Anticipate little difficulty in renting an alternative village hall etc.
Meetings	Meetings may have to be held remotely in the event of a pandemic	M	In 2020 and 2021 the Government made special dispensation for meetings to be held on a hybrid basis or fully remotely. In the aftermath of the pandemic and when remote meetings were no longer allowed, special procedures were put in place to enable meetings to continue in a safe manner, under a bespoke Covid risk assessment. In the event of a recurrence the Covid risk assessment would need to be refreshed and updated procedures introduced	Arrangements made before worked satisfactorily and could be repeated in case of need.
General Assets & Maintenance	Loss or Damage	L	An annual review of the Council's modest assets is undertaken.	Bus shelter ECC have been approached to adopt this. Play equipment covered separately
	Risk/damage to third party property or individuals	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. All assets are insured and reviewed annually.	Asset register reviewed annually, and subject to internal audit, and insurance provision checked at each renewal.
Play Equipment & Adult Fitness Assets	Loss or damage	M	Willingale is a low crime area, but some modest vandalism has been seen in the past. The hedge erected by the Cricket Club presents some issues in terms of screening the equipment thus making the detection of damage as it occurs, problematic.	No issues encountered in last 48 months so considered acceptable in the absence of an agreed alternative.
	Child Safety and adult safety	L	All equipment is modern and constructed and installed to the highest and latest standards for child/adult safety, so this is considered low risk.	No action – signage installed by the Council alerts users to the danger.
		M	There is some risk to physical safety of users due to the proximity of the equipment to the cricket pitch. This risk is reduced in terms of the child play equipment by the installation of a hedge by the Cricket Club.	Notices warning of the danger of cricket balls, and disclaiming liability are erected near the equipment.
		M	The erection of a hedge by the Cricket Club raises potential issues of child visibility and increases child safety risks.	Not under the control of the Council, but risk considered low given nature of environment.

	Structural safety and integrity	L	All equipment is modern and constructed and installed to the highest and latest standards for child safety, so this is considered low risk. A designated Parish Councillor undertakes physical checks in line with recommendations by the manufacturers and an annual external inspection is made.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
	Inspection and maintenance	L	The equipment is inspected annually by a qualified independent 3rd party. Monthly inspections are made by a designated Councillor and recorded. Any issues arising from the inspections are dealt with by two Councillors working together and in line with standard health and safety practices when using leaf blowers, mowers, tree pruners, and weedkiller etc. There is no lone working when using tools or equipment.	Existing procedures considered adequate. Councillor volunteers required to follow HSE guidelines in the use of weedkiller treatments etc.
Notice boards	Risk of damage and/or injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council has one notice board sited within the parish at a location approval by relevant parties. The noticeboard is inspected regularly by the Vice-Chair and any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Airfield Memorial	Risk of injury to third parties if designated area becomes damaged or overgrown etc	L	Weed control matting is installed topped by granite chippings and a periodic inspection regime in place to check the earth mound and fencing. NB: the memorial itself is the property of and responsibility of the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (www.abct.org.uk)	Existing procedure considered adequate.
Street furniture	Risk of damage or injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is partially responsible for one bus shelter, for one Village sign and two bench seats around the village. These items are covered by insurance. An informal programme of inspections is carried out, all reported damage or faults to the Council and dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.
Council records paper	Loss through, theft, fire or damage	L	Parish Council paper records are held at the Clerk's premises, although few, if any are held in paper form only, with most being held electronically.	Current position considered acceptable
Council records electronic	Loss through:		The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Council's computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals.	A backup of the council files is made to an external hard drive.
	theft	L		
	fire	L		
	damage	L		
	corruption of computer	M		