



Fakenham Town Council

Fakenham Connect, Oak Street, Fakenham, Norfolk. NR21 9DY

Tel: 01328 853653

Email: info@fakenhamtowncouncil.co.uk

Website: www.fakenhamtowncouncil.org.uk

Town Clerk: Linda Jennings

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

**A copy of this Guide is kept in the Town Council Offices
at the Connect Building**

Good governance, accountability and transparency are essential to local councils. Those who are responsible for the conduct of public business and for spending public money must ensure that everything is conducted in accordance with the law and proper practices. As with all management systems the risk management policy should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that all risks are identified, controls are implemented and that they remain effective.

The Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations issued from time to time under the Act, set out how we should act when accounting for public funds. This includes an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and also a formal financial risk assessment. This is part of the Annual Return, as identified in Section 2 part 5 of the Statement of Assurance, which is made to the External Auditor and will be inspected by the independent Internal Auditor. The Policy is intended as a working document for the Internal Auditor, Councillors and Town Council employees, and will assist elected members in their approval of the Statement of Assurance.

Risk Management helps achieve the objectives of the organisation to manage risks effectively and to deliver high quality public services. Risk management is ultimately the responsibility of all members, and those risks should be identified, consequences evaluated and decisions made to include appropriate measures to avoid, reduce and control the risks and consequences. Councillors have a duty to make themselves familiar with the requirements contained in the Audit Regulations, as they are legally responsible as the elected members.

Source: *Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales*

Dated 18 September 2018

Updated

1 IDENTIFYING THE AREAS OF ACTIVITIES UNDER OUR MANAGEMENT

Council Offices, Connect Building, Oak Street, Fakenham

The Council is a tenant in this building, which is owned and managed by NNDC. One of our main functions is to organise meetings for our members and the public, and deal with matters arising from those meetings. We also have financial responsibility and a managerial responsibility - managing allotments, cemeteries and open space areas, arranging site visits. We also report problems on behalf of the public for services provided by other tiers of government

Queen's Road Cemetery and Chapel

A town centre Cemetery, where burials can still take place, in the Garden Plot. The Cemetery is open at all times.

St Peter's Garden

We maintain this garden, near to the Parish Church. Interment of ashes still takes place here in a restricted area managed by the Parish Church, not the Council.

Creake Road Cemetery

An out-of-town site, with archway entrance, brick storage buildings and wall to either side of the entrance. This is the site currently used for burials. The site is open at all times. We arrange matters concerning burial plots and memorials as well as the maintenance of the site. Maintenance of the site is arranged through a contractor. Funeral Directors prepare burial plots and reinstate areas after burial.

Peckover Cemetery

Town Centre Cemetery with wall surrounds and mature evergreen oak trees, adjacent to the Aldiss Superstore. The site is available for future burials of the Peckover family.

Allotment sites

- (1) Rudham Stile Lane (some plots available).
- (2) Greenway Lane (some plots available).
- (3) Grove Lane (some plots available).

Playing Fields

- (1) Hayes Lane. Wooden play equipment is sited on a large area of open space; there is also play and fitness equipment. The entrance is from Hayes Lane.
- (2) Whitelands. Play Equipment on a large grassed area.
- (3) Millennium Park. Has play equipment, including a cable rider and skate park. There is a large area of grassland and a landscaped garden area (Managed by the Town Council as the Trustees of the Fakenham Recreation Ground Charity).
- (4) Trap Lane Field (for sports), Pavilion, Depot and Storage Container.

Other Open Spaces sites

- 1 Railway Cutting
- 2 Trap Lane Field
- 3 Goggs' Mill Picnic Area

Goggs' Meadow, Edmondson's Acres and Bacon's Piece are now leased to the Hawk & Owl Trust.

Street Lights

Street Lights (365) owned and maintained in the town. Our Contractor is K & M Street Lighting Services. We report faulty lights, vandalism and impact damage to K & M Street Lighting Services.

Market Management

Managing the Market. We manage stallholders' sites, and collect market tolls. The Market is now self-clean and most Traders are now paying by Cheque or Direct Debit.

Market Tolls

Local organisations can apply to the Market Tolls for funding for new projects, social activities, and other events. Cllrs. decide whether the criteria have been met, before awarding grants.

Provide and maintain street furniture

The Town Council has benches in various locations in the town. These are inspected and repaired regularly. The Council has been gifted a marble seat which is on Goggs' Picnic Area. It also maintains the Edward VII Coronation Lamp, the Fakenham Town Sign, the War Memorial and Bus Shelters.

Street Collecting Licences

(Delegated task from NNDC)

2 ABOUT THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and 1 outdoor staff member are employed and there is also the contracted finance team. The Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk collects the Market Tolls from the Thursday Charter Market. The Town Council Office is open from 10am to 2pm Monday to Friday to deal with

queries from the public. Risk assessments have been carried out for activities undertaken in the office. (Refer Appendices). Risk assessments have been carried out for work undertaken by outside staff members also Councillors and the general public when attending the Council offices. (refer appendices).

3 DETAIL OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Council Offices, Connect Centre, Oak Street Fakenham

The main Connect Centre office is open to the public from 9.00am until 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 10am to 5pm Wednesday and 9am to 4.30pm Friday. The front desk is closed from 12.30pm–1.30pm for lunch. The front desk staff may occasionally direct visitors to the Town Council office. The door to the Town Council office is open to the public from 10.00am to 2pm Monday to Friday. The Clerk is available to Councillors at all other times i.e. from 8am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 1pm Friday. Daily cleaning services are provided by NNDC and the cost of this is included in the service charge. Outside of the public hours the door into the Town Council office is locked. Outside of office staff working time the door into the store cupboard is also locked. In the store cupboard there is a locked metal fire-proof storage cabinet, containing Minute Books and Burial Books and a storage cupboard situated in the Marriage/Committee Room is also locked, the Councils' chairs, tables, pictures and other memorabilia are stored in here, under an agreement made with Fakenham Connect in 2000.

Creake Road, Queen's Road Cemetery and Chapel and Peckover Cemetery

Funeral Directors prepare the Graves. Graves are prepared only after confirmation from the office that this is possible i.e. in terms of time and location of the plot. Memorials are inspected every five years and are recorded. Creake Road Cemetery is open at all times; Queen's Road Cemetery is open at all times and Peckover cemetery is locked. There are Rules and Regulations in both the Creake and Queen's Road cemeteries concerning burials and interments, memorials and general use of the site. The Rules and Regulations are posted on a notice board in the cemetery. Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons are informed of the Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations are reviewed annually.

Allotment sites

- (1) Rudham Stile Lane (some plots available)
- (2) Greenway Lane (some plots available)
- (3) Grove Lane Site (some plots available)

Rents are reviewed annually and rent increases are notified to the tenants 12 months in advance. Rents are due on 11th October annually (Michaelmas)

The office staff manages the sites. Rudham Stile Lane and Greenway Lane sites have two Tenant Representatives and Grove Lane has one. Tenancy agreements are signed and Tenants are given a copy of the Rules. Council staff carries out regular inspections of the sites

Playing Fields

- (1) Hayes Lane - Trim Trail, outdoor gym equipment and play equipment on a large area of open space.
- (2) Whitelands. Infant swings and a slide with a public path through the site.
- (3) Millennium Park - Includes play equipment, skate park, a cable rider and outdoor gym equipment. (Charity managed by the Town Council and Councillors are Trustees)
- (4) Trap Lane Pavilion, Depot, and storage container.

Town Council staff inspects each site weekly, and there is a formal RoSPA inspection each year. Problems are reported to the Town Clerk who then organises repairs and replacements as required. Weekly Inspection sheets are maintained and a log of repairs kept.

Other Open Spaces sites

Goggs' Mill Picnic Area
Railway cutting
Trap Lane Field

Inspection of these areas is limited to that provided by the maintenance contractor before cutting of the site. A tender document is prepared every third year for the contract grass cutting of all the above areas (except Railway Cutting and Trap Lane Field).

Litter picking is undertaken by the Council's own maintenance staff

Provide and maintain street furniture

The Town Council has benches in various locations in the town. These are inspected and repaired regularly. The Council has been gifted a marble seat which is on Goggs' Picnic Area. It also maintains the Edward VII Coronation Lamp, the Town Sign, the War Memorial and the Bus Shelters.

Street Lights

Street Lights owned and maintained in the town.

Reports of faulty lights are given to the Contractor K & M Street Lighting Services. The Contractor is advised that only reports of faulty lights made by the office are to be repaired. A tender document is prepared every third year for the maintenance contract of the lights. K & M Street Lighting Services undertakes an annual inspection of each light.

Market Management

Since 1 January 2011, the Charter Market Stallholders take their waste away. The Groundsman checks for any litter at the end of the day. Some traders rents are paid in cash.

Street Collecting Licences

(Delegated task from NNDC)

No financial support is offered for undertaking this task.

4 RISK IDENTIFICATION

The current Insurance Provider is:

Zurich Insurance, Drayton House, Chichester, PO20 2EW

Tel: 01243 832135

e-mail: jonathan.meiseles@zurichtogether.co.uk

The policy renewal is 1 January

Policy Number: YLL-2720841923

The Insurance Policy is reviewed annually. There is a public liability of £10 million. The National Association of Local Councils recommends this amount. There is also Employers Liability, Fidelity Guarantee and vehicle Insurance. Employers Liability certificates are displayed and retained in the cupboard

4.1 Protection of Physical Assets owned by the Council (refer Assets Register)

4.1.1 Material Damage:

Property and Furniture identified in the Assets Register – most assets are insured.

Gates and Walls identified in the Assets Register – impact/vandalism only

Office Contents – all risks

Street Lights are insured

Internal Controls:

- Valuations of the above items are detailed in the Fixed Assets Register. This is increased each year and is index linked within the Insurance Policy.
- Our Insurers recommend that buildings should have a professional valuation once every five years.
- The Town Clerk updates the Insurance Policy as the year progresses and checks this against the revised Policy, which is received near the renewal date (January).
- Grounds maintenance is carried out by an appointed contractor and the Town Council's Groundsman.
- Portable electrical equipment used is tested every year.
- The Town Council is asked to review its insurance policy each year to consider including all items in the policy.

Insurance cover for risk is the most common approach to certain types of inherent risks; refer to the Fixed Asset Register.

4.2 Risk of Damage to Third Party property or individuals as a consequence of the Council providing services or amenities to the public. (Refer Appendices)

The above are identified as: Street lights / cemetery /bus shelters / benches / notice-boards /equipment on open spaces/charter market.

Internal Controls:

- Annual inspection of all streetlights by the approved Contractor. This is currently K & M Street Lighting Services Ltd Tel 01480 395806. Reporting of street lighting problems is undertaken by Town Council Staff. A light is either the responsibility of the Town Council, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, or in some cases Victory Housing. The report is compared to the account presented by the Contractor. Certain information is requested from people reporting faulty lights: the property number near the column, the problem with the light.
- The Town Clerk and the Town Council's outside staff member undertake annual inspections of street furniture and Cemeteries.
- Grave digging is arranged by Funeral Directors, who undertake risk assessments. Grave digging must be authorised by the Town Council, in the plot allocated. Installation of Memorials must be undertaken by authorised masons on the allocated plot.
- The Town Council operates the cemetery with a comprehensive list of rules and regulations, which are updated regularly. They are issued to all local Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons.
- Council staff undertake a weekly inspection of the Playing Fields, equipment and Open Space areas.

4.3 Risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party (consequential loss).

The sources of income to the Council are limited, as the services it offers are very small. Its main source of income is the precept. Essential services are provided by other tiers of government.

4.4 Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty (fidelity guarantee)

Internal Controls:

- There is currently a fidelity guarantee of £250,000, covered by Insurance. This is reviewed annually on advice from the Internal Auditor.
- Loss of Cash while in transit, also includes Market rents or on the premises at the Connect Centre is covered by insurance.
- Loss or theft of miscellaneous cash receipts. (Refer Appendix)
- Loss or theft of stamps and stationery (refer Appendix)

4.5 Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability)

Internal Controls:

- Limit of Indemnity £10,000,000. This is reviewed annually and/or upon advice from National Association of Local Councils (NALC) or The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

4.6 Employers Liability and Personal Accident

The Town Council employs three members of staff, the Town Clerk (full-time), and Administration Assistant (part-time) and one full-time outside staff.

Internal Controls:

- Limit of Indemnity £10,000,000. This is reviewed annually and /or upon advice from NALC or the SLCC. Certificates of Employers Liability are retained for 40 years, and the current certificate is displayed.
- There is insurance in place for personal accident to cover employees, councillors and contracted staff.
- The finance team is contracted on a part time basis.

4.7 Libel and Slander

Internal Controls:

- Sum Insured £10,000,000. This is reviewed annually and upon advice from NALC or the SLCC
- Ensuring the robustness of insurance providers by reference to NALC and the SLCC
- Annual review of the Policy and its content
- Tri-annual review of Insurance providers (next due December 2019)
- Notification of all potential claims, without delay to the Insurers
- Maintenance of filing systems (Ref Insurance) and annual review of those systems
- Provide training to members and officers

5 MANAGEMENT OF RISKS THROUGH A THIRD PARTY

RISK IDENTIFICATION

- 5.1** The Town Council will buy in services from specialist external bodies, or professional services. (accountancy, legal and digital services)
- 5.2** The Town Council will also take the advice of specialist external bodies, whether statutory or non-statutory.
- 5.3** The Town Council will obtain three quotations for goods and services over £5,000.
- 5.4** Service interruption due to long-term absence of the Town Clerk and Administration Assistant. – covered by Insurance

Internals Controls:

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations dealing with the award of contracts for services and the purchase of capital equipment. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are reviewed each year.
- Regular reports are made to council on the performance of suppliers / contractors.
- There are regular monthly finance reports and quarterly budgetary reports to council.
- There is a non-independent internal control management (member of the finance committee) arrangement for the detecting and deterring of fraud and or corruption and for the ensuring of routine financial maintenance of the council's affairs as prescribed by the Audit Regulations. There is also an internal and external auditor.
- Legal powers for functions are detailed in the minutes
- Tender documents drawn up

6 SELF-MANAGEMENT OF RISKS**RISK IDENTIFICATION****6.1 Ensuring that all requirements are met under Employment Law and Inland Revenue Regulations****Internal Controls:**

- Issuing of Contracts of Employment, annual staff appraisals and job description reviews.
- Completion of time sheets
- Maintenance of Personnel files
- Defined channels for addressing concerns for staff, councillors and members of the public. Complaints Policy and Grievance and Disciplinary Policies are in place.
- The council maintains an adequate budgetary provision for the training of staff and councillors.

Refer FRA8

6.2 Ensuring all financial records are kept in accordance with statutory requirements**Internal Controls:**

- Standing orders and financial regulations are reviewed each year.
- There is a system of non-independent internal control (by a member of the Council). Such control takes place on a monthly basis. Control procedures were updated in 2016 at the Governance Review.

- Provision of independent internal audit as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2008).
- Monthly bank reconciliations of the Council bank accounts are sent to Councillors.
- Insurance Policy agreed and reviewed by the council

6.3 Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers, ensuring compliance with borrowing restrictions, and ensuring all requirements are met under Customs & Excise.

Internal Controls:

- Refer 3.1 and 3.2 above

6.4 Ensuring the adequacy of the annual precept and within sound budgeting arrangements.

Internal Controls:

- Full Council approval of Budget (by January)
- Regular quarterly reporting of budgetary matters to Council
- Proper, timely and accurate reporting of Council business in the minutes to include full details on all items of expenditure
- Projected Receipts and Payments drawn up for special activities to identify overall costs and possible losses for consideration by members. (i.e. project financial risk assessments)
- Annual review of contingency reserves.

6.5 Ensuring Complaints and Enquiries from the public are adequately addressed.

Internal Controls:

- Defined complaints policy, reviewed annually
- Defined enquiries procedure and where ever possible acknowledgements to enquiries are made within 7 days with full responses within 14 days.

6.6 Proper document control.

Internal controls:

- Provision and maintenance of indexed filing system
- Maintenance of records as required for audit and insurance purposes
- Maintenance of a minute book, which is properly numbered, paginated and signed with a master copy for safekeeping.
- Monthly update of cemetery books and records, with a master copy for safe keeping
- Procedures for dealing with and monitoring grants or loans, and report to the Town Council. (Grant Application Form)

- Meeting the laid down times for responding to consultation invitation. When this cannot be appropriately done, the date of response will be advised to the issuing body.
- Back up system for information in the event of theft or fire at the Connect Centre (refer Appendix 5)

6.7 Register of Members Interests, and gifts and hospitality in place, complete, accurate and up to date.

Internal Controls:

- Annual Review (May) of Members Interests, maintained in filing system with a copy sent to the Monitoring Officer. Members are asked to keep these up to date.
- Signed Adoption of Code of Conduct for all members, maintained in filing system.
- Recording in the Minutes.
- Separate file maintained for Declarations of Interest: i) by member, and ii) by meeting.

6.8 Ensuring the proper use of funds granted to local community bodies under specific powers or under Section 137.

Internal Controls:

- Detailing the above items in the minutes
- Requesting such bodies for statements detailing expenditure to enable monitoring of these funds and substantiate the need for those funds.
- *Management of Market Tolls Grant awards by Full Council.*