

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

The 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 inherent risks. The Parish Council, based on a recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

This document has been produced to enable Weston on the Green Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

1. Financial and Management

Category	Risk (s) identified	H/M/L Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its Statutory duty	L	To determine the precept amount required, Council receives quarterly budget update information. At the budgeting meeting Council to receive a budget report, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the Clerk. With this information 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 Cherwell District Council. The figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing.	Ensure clerk delivers timely, quarterly updates and utilises actuals and projected position for next budgeting cycle.
Budget Provision and Reserves	Insufficient available funds	L	A full budget is developed in advance of the precept request. This should include funds placed in reserve for future projects, a contingency fund and three months' running costs (based on last year's running cost numbers).	

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

Financial Records, Inadequate Records	Inadequate checks	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which sets out the requirements. Existing procedures to be reviewed and signed off annually.	Review of financial regulations approved by full Council in October 2019. Review under way for 2020.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks	M	Existing procedure ensures 3 councillors are sited on all payments made. Payments processed are reconciled by the Clerk. Invoices received are logged and tracked by the Clerk. Monthly reconciliation of all payments made by Clerk. Clerk undertakes quarterly reconciliation of full accounts.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Bank mistakes	L		
	Cheque mistakes	L	Cheques to be written by the Clerk following inspection of the invoices and signed by two Councillors as per agreement at a PC Meeting. Cheque, cheque counterfoil, invoice and schedule to be signed or initialled.	
Reporting and Auditing	Information communication	L	Financial information is a regular agenda item, all invoices listed by item to be discussed and reviewed at each meeting.	Quarterly update on status provided by the Clerk.
Grants	Receipt of grants	L	Parish Council receives any grants the Council apply for.	Clerk to monitor and ensure PC receives all expected grants.
Charges	Rents receivable	L	The Parish Council receives rent from Ardley United Football Club for hire of the playing field on an initial 3-year contract.	Clerk to monitor and ensure PC receives

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

				annual rent from Ardley United Football Club.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices / Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality	L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed manor by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements including publishing on the Agenda and Minutes section of the Parish Council Website. Minutes are approved and signed at the next council meeting.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Standing Orders	M	To be reviewed and agreed during each financial year.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Financial Regulations	M	To be reviewed and agreed during each financial year.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Business Conduct	L	Agenda displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Members adhere to Code of Conduct.
Councillors	Losing a Councillor	L	When a vacancy arises there is a legal process to follow which leads to either a by-election or a co-option process. The more usual is a co-option which starts with an advert, acceptance of applications, consideration of applicants and co-option vote at a Council meeting. The Council tries to draw members from around the Parish to make sure each area is represented.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Losing more than four Councillors to make the Council inquorate	M	If there are more than four vacancies at any one time, the Council becomes inquorate and the District Council will take over the running of the Council (at the Village's expense).	Procedures of Cherwell District Council are adequate.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

Members Interests and Code of Conduct	Conflict of interests	L	Declarations of interest by members at all Council meetings.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Code of Conduct	L	Code of Conduct issued by Cherwell District Council, to be re-adopted before end of Financial Year.	Issue Code of Conduct to all Councillors on election.
	Register of members' interests	L	Register of members' interest forms reviewed regularly.	Members take responsibility to update register.
Insurance	Adequacy	L	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements. Employers and Employee liabilities are a necessity within policies. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Fidelity checks require putting in place.	Put in place fidelity checks for next financial year.
	Cost	L	A new insurance policy has been arranged for 2021-2022 with a 3-year deal taken out. Clerk and finance advisory group obtained quotes and confirmed appropriate policy.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Compliance	L	To be completed	TBC
	Fidelity Guarantee	M	To be completed	TBC
Data Protection	Policy provision	M	PC needs to put in place a Data Protection Policy.	Action required to become compliant.
Freedom of Information	Policy	M	Council does not have a current Model Publication Scheme in place. Work required to develop one.	Action required to address this risk.
	Provision	M	The PC is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create a number of additional hours work.	Action required to address this risk.
Document Retention	Policy	L	The PC does not currently have a Document Retention policy, this requires action in due course.	Action required to address this risk.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting2. Physical equipment / areas

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review / Assess / Revise
Assets	Loss or damage	L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision.	Existing procedures adequate.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. Assets are insured.	Existing procedures adequate.
Notice Board	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council currently has one notice board and 4 planter noticeboards. The Clerk checks the condition when posting notices.	Existing procedures adequate.
Street Furniture	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council is responsible for 10 benches, 4 dog bins, 8 litter bins and 3 picnic benches. No formalised programme of inspections is carried out, but all reports of damage or faults are reported to the Council and dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.
Stocks Green	Risk of damage	L	The Parish Council is responsible for the open area of land on the Stocks Green, including the stocks. An annual inspection should be taken on the Stocks.	Inspection of the Stocks to be included as part of the Council's work days.
Playing field and Play Area Equipment	Risk of damage	M	The Parish Council is responsible for the playing field and play area. A monthly inspection is undertaken and reported to the PC meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			An annual RoSPA safety inspection on the play area is carried out annually.	
Playing Field	Increased use of the playing field for social events results in greater chance of liability for the Parish Council	L	Current insurance policy is sufficient.	Existing procedure adequate.
Playing field and Spinney	Risk of injury due to poorly managed trees	M	At present management of the trees, and the risk associated with them, sits with the land owner, Duchy of Cornwall. Monthly playground inspection includes assessing risks in the general playing field area and spinney.	Existing procedure adequate.
Spinney – Picnic Area	Risk of fire or accident due to BBQ use in the picnic area	M	New picnic benches by the stream could potentially encourage use of a BBQ. Residents need to be made aware, via Village News, of location of area in relation to the spinney.	A comment on sensible use of the area added in the Village News.
Spinney Stream	Risk of injury due to lack of awareness of stream	M	Whilst there is no current plan to replace the original fence between the spinney and playing field there is a natural barrier which highlights the change in environment.	
Gallosbrook stream, adjacent Bletchingdon Road	Risk of injury to road users due to lack of awareness of stream at edge of road	H	Bollards need to be kept trimmed and cleared so they remain visible. Included as part of current grass cutting contract.	

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

North Lane Pond	Risk to reputation due to slow speed to act when North Lane pond dries up and RSPCA are called in	M	Water levels in the pond need to be regularly checked, especially during the summer months, and any issues reported.	A Councillor on North Lane asked to monitor water levels in the pond and report back to the Council.
Oak Tree Pond and North Lane Pond	Risk of injury due to pond bank subsidence	M	Undertake monthly review of pond areas to assess risks.	Action plan in place.
Meeting Locations	Adequacy	L	The Parish Council meeting is held in a venue considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members and the general public.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Health and Safety	M		
Council Records – Paper	Loss through: theft fire damage	L M L	The Parish Council records are stored at the village hall and in the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records. Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate. Appropriate archiving of documents to be investigated.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
Council Records – Electronic	Loss through: theft fire damage	L L L	The Parish Council electronic records are stored on the Clerk's laptop held with the Clerk at home. The data is constantly backed up to OneDrive in the Cloud and a physical backup is taken regularly. Antivirus software is also used to prevent corruption of the computer.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
Mobility Scooters in Village	Risk of accident on Church Road/Church Lane as residents use mobility scooters to reach village amenities	M	Current insurance policy covers the Council. When looking at traffic improvement works	Action plan in place.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			this can be taken into consideration. Traffic group aware of consideration.	
Village Maintenance	Risk of necessary maintenance works around the village taking too long to action resulting in risk to reputation of the Council	M	The Council requires either a wider team of volunteers to undertake works in the village or a handyman could be employed.	Council has requested volunteers to help via the Village News.
Flooding	Risk that flooding due to bad weather, and limited maintenance of local ditches and the weir create areas of localised flooding which impacts local roads and PC property such as the playing field and spinney.	L	Highlight the need for local residents and landowners to review their drains and ditches and make sure they are cleared out. PC to agree a programme of work to clean the ditches it owns and investigate further the maintenance of the weir. Clerk to assess whether any OCC owned/managed ditches require work and to escalate as necessary.	Action plan in place.
Antisocial Behaviour	Risk that limited local resources for teenagers result in antisocial behaviour in areas of the Parish e.g. the spinney that causes damage to PC property or raises safety concerns for local residents.	L	Highlight incidents to be reported to 101 so an evidence base can be compiled, and local policing teams can then increase their patrols of the area. Ongoing issues to be highlighted to the community policing team by PC. PC liaison with community policing team and Neighbourhood Watch team. Clerk/Neighbourhood Watch to advertise procedure of reporting incidents to 101 in Village News.	Action plan in place.

3. Rental of Playing Field by Ardley United Football Club

Category	Risk (s) identified	H/M/L Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
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Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

Safeguarding	Safeguarding of children	L	Parish Council obtained a copy of Ardley United Football Clubs - Safeguarding Children Policy.	Clerk to ensure the latest version is received each year.
Communication	Misunderstandings between parties surrounding the agreement for renting the playing field	L	The Parish Council and Ardley FC have signed a Terms of Agreement for hiring the playing field.	Terms to be reviewed annually.
	Village feel uninformed of when playing field in use	L	Ardley FC to provide fixture list to the clerk. Parish Council to notify village of fixtures on noticeboard at the playing field, PC website and Village News.	Clerk to obtain regular updates and ensure all mediums are kept up to date
Damage	Damage to playing field and surrounding boundaries, fences and gates	L	Parish Council existing insurance policy covers damage to these areas. The areas are checked as part of the works report submitted to the Parish Council each month.	Existing procedures considered adequate.
	Damage to equipment owned by Ardley FC and retained on playing field	M	Ardley FC have been made aware of the key factors relating to the Parish Council's insurance policy. Ardley FC have confirmed that they have their own insurance to cover potential damage and that their goals can remain in place and be used by residents.	A sign has been placed on each set of goals (Ardley FC and PC owned) to highlight it is dangerous to swing on the goal posts.
Litter	Additional litter problems with increased use of playing field	L	Litter in the area to be monitored. If considered a problem a further bin could be added e.g. in the car park.	Ongoing monitoring by the Council required.
Car Parking	Car parking on residential streets causing distress to residents	M	Notice highlighting no car parking on residential streets to be placed on noticeboard at the playing field. Ardley FC have been advised of a potential car parking issue with residents and have included instructions of where is suitable to park i.e. car park and extended into playing field if required in their notes to families for matches.	Ongoing monitoring by the Council required.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

Flooding	There is a risk that the PC isn't able to deliver on its contractual obligations to Ardley FC to provide an accessible playing surface for football.	L	<p>Highlight the need for local residents and landowners to review their drains and ditches and make sure they are cleared out. PC to agree a programme of work to clean the ditches it owns and investigate further the maintenance of the weir. Clerk to assess whether any OCC owned/managed ditches require work and to escalate as necessary.</p> <p>Potential flooding has been highlighted as a concern to Ardley FC.</p>	Ongoing monitoring by the Council required.
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4. Risks associated with the process of purchasing the playing field and spinney by the Parish Council (Purchase currently in progress)

Category	Risk (s) identified	H/M/L Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Purchase Process	1a. Risk that the public do not feel the purchase price of the playing field has been sufficiently assessed against market rates.	M	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>Finance Group analysis of current agricultural land value at £9k p.a. with the proposed field acreage at approximately 2.726 acres suggests a land value for the field of c£24.5k (plus 1.189 ac of woodland). However, the land under discussion is more developed than agricultural land, with a recently replaced tree stock in the spinney, active playing field, car park, fencing and installed playground. Therefore, it is the assessment of the Finance Group that the purchase price of £30k</p>	Action: Review mitigating actions if the purchase price were to change for any reason.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			<p>required by the Duchy for the sale to progress is not far from the true value of the land.</p> <p>The Finance Group discussed whether it necessary to appoint a surveyor to confirm the valuation. After debate a unanimous decision was made that it would be better to save the additional expense from public funds.</p>	
	1b. Risk that villagers do not feel sufficiently engaged in the purchase of the playing field.	L	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>There is a section on the Parish Council website to provide details of the project, loan information and list out where in Parish Council minutes playing field discussions have taken place. Updates are and continue to be provided regularly in Village News articles.</p>	Action: Clerk to continue to update the Parish Council website and ensure updated information is placed in each edition of the Village News.
	1c. Risk that the commitment of the Parish Council to pay Duchy of Cornwall legal fees is not perceived to be a good use of public funds, particularly in light of the fact that they are substantially in excess of those prudently negotiated by the Parish Council for their own legal advice.	M	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>As the Parish Council has approached the Duchy to progress this sale, the Duchy have articulated terms required for them to release this land. Following a robust discussion it was unanimously felt by the Finance Group that these terms are non-negotiable.</p> <p>The Finance Group also discussed the rate of fees expected from the Duchy's solicitors,</p>	Action: Finance Group to continue to monitor costs via legal advisers and report to PC where necessary.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			<p>again the Finance Group felt that there was no room for negotiation on the provider of legal fees to the Duchy.</p> <p>The Finance Group agreed that it was not optimal that there was no cap of fees incurred by the Duchy solicitors. It agreed that it was necessary to write to the PC solicitors to gain assurance over this.</p> <p>Letter dispatched 24/08/20 to seek assurance that –</p> <p>All bills raised by the Duchy solicitors be reviewed by PC solicitors.</p> <p>If costs by the Duchy solicitors exceed £2k plus VAT the PC will be notified and further approvals by the PC will be required.</p> <p>If fees fall below £2k plus VAT that these funds will be returned to the PC.</p> <p>Response received confirmed that the controls requested would be executed by Spratt Endicott.</p>	
	<p>1d Risk that the Parish Council doesn't know what legal entity is best placed to own the playing field.</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>The Finance Group discussed this issue and decided to request some advice on the matter.</p> <p>Advice received from OALC which highlighted it is common for Parish Council's to own land</p>	<p>Action: Review next steps following receipt of legal advice.</p>

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			but would need to discuss with solicitor the best mechanism for protecting the land. The finance group has discussed appropriate ownership of the playing field and spinney. At the present time it proposes that when the lawyers draw up the deeds the Parish Council will be listed as owner. This risk will remain on the PC risk register for review in future years to ensure the land continues to be best protected for the future.	
	1e. Risk that the Parish Council is not best placed to act as a custodian of the playing field asset to protect it for future generations of village residents.	L	Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting. The Finance Group acknowledged that in many cases villages have set up a separate group to manage assets such as a playing field. Following discussion the Finance Group was satisfied that the PC was able to pull in advice from the relevant bodies e.g. Woodland Trust, Oxfordshire Playing Fields Trust to enable effective management of the asset at the current time.	Action: Review as part of the annual risk review of the council, or in the context of legal advice relating to risk 1d, whichever is soonest.

5. Risks associated with the management of the playing field and spinney if owned by the Parish Council

Category	Risk (s) identified	HML Rating	Management / Control of Risk	Review /Assess / Revise
Management	2a. Risk that the Parish Council's insurance premium increases as a result of the ownership of the playing field and spinney.	L	Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting. Clerk investigated with the Parish Council's current insurer who replied: "The Public	Action: Review following receipt of advice.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			<p>Liability section of the policy automatically covers the Parish Council’s responsibilities towards any land or assets up to £10m. There is currently no cover provided for any loss and damage to the piece of land, notably the surface itself and in most instances, loss and damage cover for land itself is NOT taken by our policyholders as the risk is reduced, with vandalism the only real peril of note.”</p> <p>The clerk is confirming whether in fact we already have protection under ‘natural surfaces’ and will advise when further information received.</p>	
	2b. Risk that neighbours of the playing field become frustrated by the potential increased use of the field.	M	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>Village News articles have communicated increasing use of the playing field, these should continue. Contact details should be clearly posted at the playing field and on the Parish Council website so that people know who to contact if they have an issue.</p>	Action: Clerk to continue to update the Parish Council website and ensure updated information is placed in each edition of the Village News.
	2c. Risk that future management costs of the spinney are not known.	M	<p>Reviewed and discussed by the Finance Group at 15/08/20 Finance Group meeting.</p> <p>Finance Group discussed the matter of historic and future costs. It assessed that historic costs associated with management of the spinney will not be directly comparable going forward due to the change in tree stock</p>	Action: Finance Group to review as part of the annual risk review of the council and the annual budgeting process.

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			<p>in the spinney. The group felt that it was able to reach out to key experts in the Woodland Trust etc to help advise on future costs but that historic costs from the Duchy were unlikely to be helpful.</p> <p>It was also agreed that funding for any improvements to the spinney or playing field were likely to come mainly from grants, not Council Tax driven public funds.</p> <p>The Clerk outlined she proposed to start early budget planning imminently to ensure that future costs could be well anticipated.</p>	
	<p>2d. Risk that young people may congregate in the spinney or playing field area resulting in antisocial behaviour that impacts the lives of villagers or low level criminal damage against PC property.</p>	L	<p>Mitigation is to make villagers aware of the use of the area, consult with the neighbourhood police team on practical actions that can protect PC property and help prevent antisocial behaviour escalation, and review the risk in line with the PC's annual risk register review.</p>	

6. Risks associated with the re-opening of the playground in July 2020 following the COVID 19 pandemic

Key Principle	Government Guidance	Assessment	Conclusion
<p>General Maintenance Issues following Lockdown</p>	<p>Ensure equipment is safe to use and that risks from damaged or defective equipment are addressed before opening.</p>	<p>Playground inspection carried out by Councillor on 25th June 2020.</p> <p>ROSPA inspection undertaken in July 2020.</p>	<p>Identified areas requiring maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass cut on 26th June 2020 • Annual washing of playground equipment and bench/picnic table required • Other works identified in report not classed as major but

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			advisable before end of the year. Number of repair jobs completed by Council on 29 th June 2020
Social Distancing	<p>Put in place measures to support social distancing – 2m or 1m plus risk mitigations. Examples given include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit number of users at any one time • Booking system • Advisory signage • Create waiting areas with barriers 	<p>As a small village the number of people using the playground at any one time should be manageable for the public to be able to adhere to social distancing rules adequately, without the requirement of a booking system.</p> <p>Advise 10 children maximum in the playground at one time.</p> <p>Advisory signage required at playground entrances/exits.</p>	<p>Advisory signage to be placed at the playground entrances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember social distancing rules - 2m or 1m plus risk mitigations • Advise maximum 10 children in playground at one time • Advise one adult per child in playground (subject to volume of visitors)
Cleaning and Hygiene	<p>Clean high traffic touch points frequently. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Play Equipment • Seating Areas • Refuse Bins <p>In addition, use signage to encourage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users to clean equipment before and after use • Use of hand sanitiser and frequent hand washing <p>Where practicable, provide hand sanitiser or hand washing facilities at entry and exit points.</p>	<p>Playground requires cleaning before playground re-opens.</p> <p>Advisory signage required at playground entrances/exits.</p>	<p>Playground to be cleaned prior to opening.</p> <p>Advisory signage to be placed at entrances/exits to the playground to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage users to clean equipment before and after use, especially at touch points e.g. handles • Encourage use of hand sanitiser and frequent hand washing, particularly at the beginning and end of play

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise people not to touch their faces, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue or arm when a tissue is not available • Advise people not to put their mouths on equipment or their hands in their mouths •
Face Coverings	If possible, a face covering should be worn in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where the public may come into contact with people they do not normally meet. (Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly).	As a small village number of people using playground at any one time should be manageable for the public to be able to adhere to social distancing rules adequately and not require the use of face coverings.	This should not be required. Playground to be monitored throughout the initial week of opening to ensure levels of usage are suitable and social distancing rules can be obeyed.
Additional Measures and Communicating with Parents	Promote responsible behaviour by children, parents, carers and guardians. For example, owners and operators should consider putting up signs to make clear to users, parents, guardians and carers that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumption of food or drink on play equipment or in the playground area is banned • parents, guardians or carers should dispose of all litter including any used protective wear such as face coverings or 	Communication to the village on guidance and advice for the safe use of the playground via playground signage, Parish Council website and the next Village News edition.	Advisory signage to be placed at entrances to the playground highlighting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents, guardians or carers are reminded that they allow children to use the playground equipment at their own risk • consumption of food or drink on play equipment or in the playground area is not advised • parents, guardians or carers should dispose of all litter

Approved at 4th November 2020 Parish Council Meeting

	gloves properly in litter bins, taking it home where a bin is not provided.		including any used protective wear or gloves properly in litter bins provided Upload all advice and guidance on the safe use of the playground onto the Parish Council website and include in the next edition of the Village News.
Considering Children with Additional Needs	Take into account the requirements of children with additional needs.	Additional comments to be provided on advisory signage.	Advisory signs will highlight the need for patience and consideration of all children and adults, being mindful to all users of the playground. Parish Clerk contact details to be placed on sign for users to report any issues or concerns.
Keeping Staff Safe	Consider the risks staff may be exposed to and how these can be mitigated. Staff roles may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning playground equipment/surrounding areas • managing queues of those waiting to use equipment • stewarding equipment to ensure users comply with rules made by the owner/operator 	Safety advice required to be provided for any volunteers, Councillors or Clerk who may undertake any cleaning procedures. Users will be advised to wipe down the equipment before and after use. Management of queues or stewarding the equipment is currently considered not to be required.	Safety advice to be provided for any volunteers, Councillors or Clerk who may undertake any cleaning procedures. Advisory signage to be placed at entrance to the playground to encourage users to clean equipment before and after use and then to follow hand washing guidelines afterwards.

