

## **Caldbeck Parish Council Risk assessment 2020-21**

As part of its financial management Caldbeck Parish Council periodically examines its risk management strategy to ensure no undue risks are being taken with money, assets or the welfare of staff and that all steps necessary to prevent injury etc to the general public are being undertaken.

The Parish Council certifies in its Annual Statement that such an assessment has been made.

The Parish Council examines all its practices and operations and checks to see if risks are being covered. The annual Local Council Insurance Policy covers Public Liability, Employers Liability, Damage to Property and Personal Accident but there are a number of other checks the council makes as part of its risk management policies.

The following items are considered as part of the risk management policy: -

1. The Parish Council is committed to making information available to the residents of the Parish in light of the Transparency Code. Its 'Guide to Proactively Published Information' is on the Parish Website, [www.caldbeck.org.uk](http://www.caldbeck.org.uk). 'Parish Council News' is normally published monthly in the Parish Magazine and the Agenda and Minutes of Meetings are published on the website, together with key papers. The Agenda is also put up on the Parish Noticeboards in Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket.
2. The Council reviews, amends and approves Standing Orders and Financial regulations at least annually. These set out in detail how financial matters should be dealt with and are the practice of the Council.
3. Each Parish Councillor has been provided with a copy of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct to remind all members of their obligations. The Code of Conduct has been updated in light of Allerdale Borough Council's advice during elections briefings that parish councils are expected to follow its Code of Conduct. A brief protocol has been added which sets out how effective relations between Parish Councillors and the Clerk should be maintained, drawing on best practice.
4. At each Parish Council Meeting a schedule of accounts and a financial statement is produced so Councillors have up to date information about the Council's financial position and this statement is recorded in the Council Minutes.
5. On line banking arrangements were in operation for the whole year and have proved effective. On line banking accounts for the vast majority of transactions. A few cheques are received for allotment and other rents.
6. The Council's insurance policy is checked annually to ensure that it provides the correct level of cover. A Fidelity Bond is contained within the Parish Council Insurance. This provides cover at all times for the Parish Council funds held within the Bank Accounts. The Fidelity Guarantee is for £25,000 which more than covers the amount held in the Parish Council's ordinary business account. The Parish Council checked with its insurers that its current insurance arrangements provide appropriate cover for continuing to operate car parking on parcels of National Park land which it is expecting to purchase.

7. There is no petty cash held by the Clerk. Expenses are claimed quarterly as per the record sheet. This procedure is verified at the annual Audit.
8. The Clerk's Job description seeks to ensure that the Contract between the Clerk and the Council is properly set out for the benefit of both parties. The Clerk is aware of his responsibilities in respect of financial and other matters relating to risk management.
9. The Parish Council has reviewed responsibilities in light of the increased range of functions performed and has agreed leads in various areas so as to ensure effective delivery of Parish Council functions and services within the Clerk's contracted hours.
10. The Council inspects the Allotments to ensure that they are being worked in line with the Allotment Agreement signed by each Allotment Holder and the Clerk on behalf of the Council. The Inspection and its findings are noted.
11. The Council visits and inspects the John Peel Shelter, the Market Cross, and the seats and litter bins owned by the Council, annually, to determine upkeep and repairs.
12. The Parish Council's asset register is reviewed and updated.
13. Risks are reported to the Parish Council as part of discussions on projects. The Parish Council is actively pursuing a number of important projects - establishing a footpath between Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket, purchasing surplus land from the National Park (including the Parish car parks and the village greens at Hesket Newmarket), exploring opportunities for self build/affordable housing, and preparing to take on the responsibility for the Caldbeck public toilets from April 2021 given Allerdale Borough Council's decisions to cease providing the service. All these projects pose potential risks which are discussed as part of decision making.
14. Because of potential risks, the Parish Council sought Counsels' Opinions in relation to car parking on common land and the footpath. Counsel's Opinion on car parking provided appropriate assurance to enable the Parish Council to move towards completion of the purchase of the National Park parcels of surplus land. Counsel's Opinion on the footpath has been shared with Allerdale Borough Council and has helped convince Allerdale of the strength of the case for the footpath. Allerdale and the Parish Council are working together to see how the footpath can best be progressed with Alkerdale indicating it is prepared to use its Footpath Creation powers.
15. The Parish Council considers emerging risks, for example the potential legal challenge pertaining to grants for grass cutting of church yards. And it has considered the risks posed by the COVID pandemic, adopting a policy for ensuring continuity of the Parish Council's functions and business.

**Reviewed and approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 22 March 2021.**