

Thorrington Parish Council

Business Continuity Plan

Introduction

Thorrington Parish Council (TPC) recognises the importance of producing and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan for implementation in the event of disruptions to the day to day running of the Council. The plan identifies the instances of disruption, the immediate response, the procedures to follow to maintain continuity of service and the follow up procedure.

Core Business of Thorrington Parish Council

The Council provides local services to its electorate including the following:

- Provision of a regular, open Parish Council meetings, with published agendas and minutes which members of the public are welcome to attend and may ask the Council questions at.
- Provision of a website, notice boards and a dedicated Facebook page to communicate important and relevant matters.
- Maintenance of street furniture - seating throughout the Parish, signage outside Thorrington Village Hall, Allotments, bus shelter and street light's.
- Waste and dog bins throughout the Parish
- Maintenance of all vegetation and trees on Parish owned land
- Cutting all grass verges in Council owned land.
- Acting as a statutory consultee on planning applications
- Providing Grant funding in support of community activities
- Managing the finances of the Council and using the precept for the benefit of the community
- Liaising with the Borough, County Council and other partner organisations on issues that affect the parish
- The Council owns Chapel Lane Playing Field.

Potential causes of disruption and actions to allow the Council's business to continue:

Loss of Clerk due to death, sudden/long term illness incapacity or resignation. Ensure any relevant log ins and passwords are available to the Chairman. Keys to any locked cabinets are available to the Chairman. Chairman and Vice Chairman to be informed. Chairman to inform Councillors and allocate essential tasks appropriately for business to continue. Identify an 'interim Clerk' prior to any disruption. Recruit a temporary replacement. Seek and employ a permanent Clerk.

Loss of Councillors due to multiple resignations causing the Council to be inquorate. Request Councillors to adopt a 'gentlemans agreement' and where-ever possible give one month's notice of any intention to resign. Co-option of additional Councillors. Clerk to inform remaining Councillors and the Returning Officer. Update website and notice boards as soon as practical. Returning Officer to advise on temporary working strategy for Council business followed by either further co option or election.

Loss of Council documents due to fire, flood or other causes. Council documents are held at the Clerk/RFOs home office. All documents held on portable hard drive which is secured in fire-proof box. Regular backup of files onto portable hard drive and 'cloud'. Copies of Land registry and Lease arrangements to be held at Essex Records Office. Clerk to inform insurance company if necessary and Council to be informed. Council to discuss at next appropriate meeting. Note: this is referenced in the Risk Assessment Policy.

Loss of Council electronic data due to fire, flood, fault, breakdown or hacking. Regular backup of files onto portable hard drive and 'cloud'. Clerk to inform insurance company if necessary and Council to be Clerk to keep up to date with IT developments and cyber security. Thorrington Parish Council Computer virus protection is kept up to date. Note: this is referenced in the Risk Assessment Policy.

Loss of Council equipment due to fire, flood, fault, breakdown or theft at the Clerks/RFO home office. All documents held on portable hard drive which is secured in fire proof box. Regular backup of files onto portable hard drive and 'cloud'. Maintain adequate insurance cover. Report theft to Police and insurance company. Council to decide on immediate replacement. Replace in accordance with financial regulations and budget. Note: this is referenced in the Risk Assessment Policy.

Loss of funds due to cyber fraud. Stop put on all payments. Clerk to immediately inform bank, Police, Cyber Fraud Agencies, all Councillors, and auditors. Establish new working procedures with bank to ensure payments can be made.

Loss of funds due to theft by the Clerk/RFO Chair and other authorised payment Councillors stop all payments. Chair to immediately inform bank, police and all Councillors and auditor. Legal action taken to recover funds. New working arrangements agreed with bank after consultation with all Councillors.

Parish Council Reserves lost or seriously diminished due to theft or unforeseen emergency works. Clerk to maintain adequate levels of reserves and ensure planned project funds are ringfenced. Inform Council of existing funds in both accounts. Contact TDC and ECC to seek emergency Reserve Funding Policy adopted by Council to ensure operational funds can be shared with Thorrington Parish Council.

Policy Adopted: 27th March 2024

Policy to be reviewed: March 2025