

Document Control

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Next review date: March 2027

CAISTOR ST EDMUND & BIXLEY PARISH COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT

Use of Powered Handheld Grounds Maintenance Equipment

(Chainsaw, Strimmer/Brush Cutter, Hedge Trimmer)

1. Who May Be Harmed?

- Parish employees
- Volunteers
- Members of the public
- Passers-by

2. General Safety Controls (Applies to ALL Equipment)

- ✓ Operators must be competent and authorised by the Council.
- ✓ Equipment visually checked before use.
- ✓ Defective equipment taken out of use immediately.
- ✓ Work area checked for hazards (stones, debris, uneven ground).
- ✓ Public kept at a safe distance.
- ✓ Warning signage used where necessary.
- ✓ Appropriate PPE worn (see below).
- ✓ Work stopped in unsafe weather conditions.
- ✓ Mobile phone available in case of emergency.

3. Personal Protective Equipment (Minimum)

- Safety boots
- Gloves
- Eye protection (visor or goggles)
- Hearing protection
- High visibility clothing

4. Tool-Specific Controls

A. Chainsaw (Higher Risk Activity)

Main Risks: Severe cuts, kickback, falling branches, noise, and vibration.

Risk assessment for use of powered handheld grounds maintenance equipment

Additional Requirements:

- ✓ Operator must hold appropriate chainsaw certification where required.
- ✓ Chainsaw protective trousers and boots worn.
- ✓ Helmet with visor and ear protection worn.
- ✓ Two-person working recommended.
- ✓ Do not operate above shoulder height.
- ✓ Maintain safe exclusion zone.
- ✓ No lone working unless risk assessed as safe.

Residual Risk: Medium / High (delete as appropriate)

B. Strimmer / Brush Cutter

Main Risks: Flying debris, eye injuries, noise exposure, vibration, trip hazards.

Controls:

- ✓ Area cleared of stones and debris before starting.
- ✓ Maintain safe distance from public (minimum 15 metres).
- ✓ Full face visor worn.
- ✓ Exposure time limited to reduce vibration risk.
- ✓ Harness used if provided.

Residual Risk: Low / Medium (delete as appropriate)

C. Hedge Trimmer

Main Risks: Cuts, contact with blade, falling, electric shock (corded models).

Controls:

- ✓ Two-handed operation at all times.
- ✓ Disconnect power before clearing blockages.
- ✓ Avoid working at height where possible.
- ✓ If ladder used, ensure it is stable and suitable.
- ✓ Keep electric cables clear of blade (if applicable).

Residual Risk: Low / Medium (delete as appropriate)

5. Fuel Safety (Petrol Equipment Only)

- ✓ Fuel stored in approved container.
- ✓ Refuel when engine is cool.
- ✓ No smoking.
- ✓ Clean up spills immediately.

6. Emergency Arrangements

- ✓ First aid kit available.
- ✓ At least one person present with basic first aid knowledge (where possible).
- ✓ In serious emergency call 999.
- ✓ Clerk to be informed of any incident or near miss.

7. Review

This assessment will be reviewed:

- Annually
- After any incident
- When new equipment is purchased