

Document Control

Adopted date: March 2026

Next review date: March 2027 (or sooner if significant change or incident occurs)

CAISTOR ST EDMUND AND BIXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Guidance to Users and Risk Assessment

1. Site Description – The Raking Pit

Location: Adjacent to Caistor Lane, Caistor St Edmund

Site Size: Approximately 1 acre

The Raking Pit dates from 1085 and was historically used for clay and gravel extraction. After excavation ceased, the pit filled naturally with water and became overgrown. The site was subsequently acquired by the Parish Council and developed, with assistance from the Norwich Fringe Project, into a semi-natural wildlife habitat for informal recreation.

The site includes:

- Open water of varying depth (deep in places)
- Natural, uneven footpaths
- Vegetation and wildlife habitat
- A small seating area
- Direct access from Caistor Lane

The site is intentionally maintained as a natural environment and is not a managed park or supervised facility. Visitors enter and use the site at their own risk.

2. Risk Assessment

Risk scoring uses:

- **Likelihood:** Low / Medium / High
- **Severity:** Low / Medium / High
- **Overall Risk:** Based on combined assessment

2.1 Identified Hazards

1. Drowning (Open Water)

- **Likelihood:** Low
- **Severity:** High
- **Overall Risk:** Medium (tolerable with controls)

Controls in place:

- Two clearly visible “Deep Water” warning signs
- Life buoys with throw lines installed
- Regular inspection of rescue equipment
- No swimming permitted
- Public guidance discouraging water contact

2. Slips, Trips and Falls (Uneven Natural Ground)

- **Likelihood:** Medium
- **Severity:** Low
- **Overall Risk:** Low

Controls in place:

- Informal natural paths maintained where reasonably practicable
- Regular visual inspections
- No concealed artificial hazards

The site remains intentionally uneven due to its natural character.

3. Disease or Illness from Water or Wildlife

- **Likelihood:** Low
- **Severity:** Medium
- **Overall Risk:** Low

Controls in place:

- No intended water contact
- Clear user guidance advising against entering the water
- Advice to wash hands if contact occurs

The water is not tested as it is not intended for recreational use.

4. Insect Bites / Natural Environmental Exposure

- **Likelihood:** Medium (seasonal)
- **Severity:** Low
- **Overall Risk:** Low

This is inherent to a rural wildlife habitat.

5. Proximity to Caistor Lane (Vehicle Impact Risk)

- **Likelihood:** Low
- **Severity:** Medium
- **Overall Risk:** Low

Controls in place:

- Defined access point
- Visibility assessment undertaken

- Users advised to supervise children when entering and leaving the site

3. Inspection and Maintenance Regime

To demonstrate reasonable care, the Parish Council operates the following regime:

- Routine inspections: At least quarterly
- Additional inspections: Following severe weather, flooding, or reports of concern
- Defects: Recorded and remedial action undertaken within a reasonable timeframe

Items checked include:

- Condition of paths
- Condition and visibility of signage
- Condition and security of life buoys and throw lines
- Evidence of vandalism or hazardous debris
- Access and boundary condition

4. Rescue Equipment

- Life buoys are installed in accessible locations
- Throw lines attached
- Equipment visually inspected during each routine inspection
- Any damage or vandalism addressed promptly

5. Guidance to Users

The Raking Pit is a natural, unsupervised open water site.

To reduce risk:

- Children must be supervised at all times
- Do not enter or attempt to swim in the water
- Avoid contact with the water
- If water contact occurs, wash hands thoroughly as soon as possible
- Take care on uneven ground
- Take particular care when entering or leaving the site near Caistor Lane

6. Emergency Procedure

In case of emergency:

- Call **999** immediately
- Provide location: *The Raking Pit, Caistor St Edmund, adjacent to Caistor Lane*
- Use available life buoy if safe to do so
- Do not enter the water to attempt a rescue

7. Reporting Hazards

Hazards or concerns should be reported to:

Parish Clerk

Tel: 01508 493134

Email: clerk@cseandbparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.cseandbparishcouncil.gov.uk

8. Scope and Limitations

This document demonstrates the Parish Council's commitment to:

- Proportionate risk management
- Preservation of biodiversity
- Reasonable practicability under the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984

The Council recognises that the site contains natural hazards inherent to open water and rural environments and manages these risks through signage, inspection, and public guidance rather than intrusive fencing or urbanisation.

9. Review

This risk assessment will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Reviewed following any serious incident
- Amended if site conditions materially change

Overall Assessment

With the controls outlined above, risks at The Raking Pit are considered adequately controlled and tolerable for a rural, publicly accessible wildlife site.