

# **ST MARY THE VIRGIN STONE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **A. General statement of policy**

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees, casual labour, voluntary helpers and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the church, churchyard, and other associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed regularly and the appropriate changes made.

In order to ensure that Health & Safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on Health & Safety will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council and its subcommittees and employees and voluntary workers will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health & safety matters.

### **Signed by**

**The Revd. Kenneth Clark  
Rector**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **B. Organisation and responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities of the Rector**

Overall responsibility for health & safety is that of the Rector who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy health & safety regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice. Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel. As new projects emerge, the names of responsible persons will be notified and the list amended accordingly.

### **Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council**

The Parochial Church Council has general responsibility to ensure that the Health & Safety Policy is implemented.

### **Responsibility of the Churchwardens**

Responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary is with the Churchwardens.

### **Responsibility of the Health & Safety Officers**

The Churchwardens also carry the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy. This may include delegating activities and responsibilities to other Responsible Persons (see below).

The responsibility of the Health & Safety Officers shall be to:

- be familiar with health & safety regulations as far as they concern church premises
- be familiar with the health & safety policy and the arrangements and ensure they are observed
- ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place
- ensure the church and hall are clean and tidy
- ensure that the churchyard is properly maintained including the safety of monuments, tombstones and trees and that the grass is kept cut.
- ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required
- ensure that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training
- ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained
- ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained
- ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed

### **Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers**

All employees and voluntary workers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this health & safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises

Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:

- comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person
- report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible to a Churchwarden and record in the Health & Safety book
- not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

## The role of Responsible Persons

Responsible persons are responsible for health and safety within specific areas of the church, during specific activities or in the undertaking of specific health and safety duties.

Responsible Persons will:

- be familiar with the health & safety policy and the arrangements and ensure they are observed
- comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to a Churchwarden or to the Rector
- report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible to a Churchwarden and record in the Health & Safety book.
- not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety
- act as a fire steward if required
- If unable to undertake their responsibilities to arrange for another competent person to do so and to advise a Churchwarden of the arrangement

The Responsible Persons during the following activities are:

- services of worship - the duty Churchwarden or Deputy Warden
- weddings, funerals, baptisms - the duty Churchwarden or Deputy Warden or the Rector
- bell ringing - Tower Captain or a competent deputy
- working party days - organiser/team leader
- events in the church or hall - event leader
- youth and children's work - group leader
- Messy Church sessions - session leader
- events held offsite - event leader

The persons responsible for undertaking the following duties or for delegating these to another competent person are:

- checking the first aid boxes and accident books in the church and church hall (bi-monthly) - Churchwardens
- reporting accidents under RIDDOR - Churchwardens or the Rector
- checking that the fire extinguishers in the church and hall are in the correct positions and have not been discharged (monthly) - Churchwardens
- checking that emergency torches are available and in working order (monthly) - Churchwardens
- checking electrical plugs, cables and sockets (three monthly) - Churchwardens
- maintaining a list of any hazardous substances which are used in the church, hall or church yard - Churchwardens
- maintaining a list of any items of plant or machinery - Churchwardens
- checking risk of trips and slips (three monthly) - Churchwardens
- checking all lights in the church, church hall and churchyard are working (three monthly) - Churchwardens
- checking buildings and glazing for any hazards (three monthly) - Churchwardens

## **C. Arrangements (implementation of the policy)**

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise as far as is reasonably practical risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors and contractors.

### **1. Accidents and First Aid**

First Aid boxes are located in the vestry and wall mounted box in the Church Hall. Their contents will be checked every two months by the responsible person and items replenished as required.

Trained/qualified First Aiders are listed in Church

The accident books are located in the glass notice board in church and on the first aid cabinet in the church Hall.

All accidents and incidents are entered in the accident book or an accident report form and our insurers advised. Completed accident forms are to be given to the Rector.

If the church or church hall is let to outside organisations, they are told in writing that in the event of an accident, details must be entered in the accident book. A separate book is to be kept for this purpose.

Accident books and accident records are regularly reviewed (bi-monthly).

#### RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995)

Under RIDDOR there is a statutory requirement to report certain types of accident, dangerous occurrences and disease to the enforcing authorities. These accidents or occurrences will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive by the responsible person who will maintain an understanding of the requirements for reporting and recording.

### **2. Fire safety**

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to achieve this we undertake the following:

- an assessment of the fire risks in the church and associated building and the risks to our neighbours. This is carried out either as a specific exercise or as part of our general Health & Safety assessments
- a check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned.
- a check that people who may be in the building can get out safely including, if necessary, the provisions of emergency lighting and fire exit signage
- to provide reasonable firefighting equipment
- a check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- a regular check that our firefighting equipment is in place and is serviceable and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company

## Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers will be kept in the following locations

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of extinguisher and capacity</u>
Church: Near West Door	2 x 9 litre water
By vestry curtain	CO <sub>2</sub>
Wiltshire Chapel	9 litre water
Chancel	9 litre water
Church Hall	CO <sub>2</sub> (by the kitchen door)
	9 litre water (by the main entrance)
	foam (by the fire exit)

The extinguishers noted above are checked every month by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged.

The extinguishers noted above are checked annually by Fire Action Limited of Unit 13, Beechcroft Farm Industries, Chapel Wood Road, Ash, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7HK.

## Other fire protection equipment

None

## Evacuation procedure

For large services and concerts when the congregation/audience exceeds 100 our procedures for stewarding and evacuation are as follows:

- all designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service/event commences and be clearly marked as the exits using the 'Running Man' symbol
- a check must be made that all doors can be opened
- Churchwardens, Deputy Wardens and Welcomers and/ or other responsible persons must be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church/church hall
- responsibility for using each fire extinguisher will be allotted to named and trained stewards
- if emergency lighting is not available, torches must be available for each steward
- in the event of an emergency (fire/bomb threat etc.) an announcement will be made by the Rector or person conducting the service/event
- from the church, persons will assemble in the park area, alongside Church Path, to the southeast of the church
- from the church hall persons will assemble on the pavement opposite the Lads of the Village PH
- the emergency services will be contacted immediately by a nominated person using a mobile phone or the telephone located in the Rectory

## Evacuation Drills

Fire Evacuation procedures from church will be announced weekly during Advent. Evacuation procedures from the Hall will be highlighted at the beginning of each event/activity.

All employees and voluntary workers should ensure they are familiar with escape routes and ensure these are kept clear and unobstructed.

If a fire is discovered, no matter how small:

- immediately raise the alarm
- telephone the emergency services
- check the building for occupants
- attack the fire if possible within your capacity using the appliances provided but without facing personal risk
- if it is not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The general rule is people before property
- evacuate to the designated assembly point
- ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

### **3. Electrical Safety**

A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the Churchwardens.

Every three months plugs, cables and sockets will be inspected by the responsible person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed will be reported to a Churchwarden for action.

Every twelve months all our portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent contractor (who is a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC), Electrical Contractors Association (ECA), National Association for Professional Inspectors and Testers (NAPIT) or other approved body to ensure that all appliances are safe. Any unsafe equipment will be safely disposed of.

Every three months a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical installation by the responsible person. Any defects will be reported to a Churchwarden for action.

Every five years our fixed electrical system will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a 'Full Scope' member of the NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT or other approved body. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out.

At intervals of not more than two and a half years our lighting conductor system will be examined and tested by a competent specialist firm of lightning engineers.

It is our policy not to sell any second hand electrical goods unless they have been inspected and tested by a suitably qualified person and a register of such equipment is maintained.

Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- visually check all electrical equipment before use
- report all faults immediately to a Churchwarden or the Rector
- do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
- no electrical equipment is to be brought onto the premises and used until it has been tested by the approved person and entered in the electrical equipment record
- electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods
- flexible cables should be so protected that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage

#### **4. Hazardous substances**

The responsible person will maintain a list of any hazardous substances used in the church, church yard or hall. Where possible, we have eliminated the use of all hazardous substances. Where this is not possible, our safety arrangements are as follows:

For all hazardous substances, which include substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive, oxidising or dangerous for the environment', data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage and action to take in the event of an accident.

Do not mix chemicals. Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

#### **5. Safety of plant and machinery**

The responsible person will maintain a list of all items of plant and machinery. The procedures for checking and rules for use are as follows:

- employees and voluntary workers must not operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use
- employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use
- machinery must be switched off before any adjustments are made
- after carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used
- before using any item of plant or machinery, a check must be made to ensure it is in a safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and there are no loose nuts or other defects
- the appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery
- persons under the age of 18 may use hand tools only and are not permitted to operate any power driven item of plant or machinery
- ladders may only be used when other equipment such as tower scaffolds or mobile elevated work platforms cannot be used and for work of short duration provided they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties
- any defect and damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to a Churchwarden or the Rector.
- All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements
- persons must not work on their own unless they have means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure that their safety is checked on.

#### **6. Slips, trips and falls – condition of floors, steps and paths**

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips and falls an inspection will be made every three months by the responsible person of:

- all floors steps and stairs in the church and hall
- all paths and steps in the churchyard with particular note made of moss, algae and leaves on paths.

Any defects will be reported to a Churchwarden who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

## **7. Lighting**

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit an inspection will be made every three months by the responsible person to ensure that all lights in the church, hall and churchyard are working. Any bulbs that require replacing will be reported to a Churchwarden who will ensure that the bulbs are replaced ensuring that the safety procedures for the replacement of bulbs is followed.

## **8. Working at high levels**

The following areas are designated as high levels:

- all lighting & wall heaters in church and tower
- gutters and the flat roof of the Wiltshire chapel

Only persons approved by the Churchwardens may work at high level. The procedures set out in policy section 5 must be followed. The appropriate training will be given and a system of recording will detail who is working where at any time.

## **9. Preparation of food**

Food is not prepared in the church or church hall premises.

We ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training.

We ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.

We refer to Food Hygiene Regulations when planning new activities which involve the preparation of food.

## **10. Manual Handling – lifting, carrying and moving loads**

Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable.

Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible.

The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling.

Only those persons who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks.

## **11. Hazardous buildings/glazing**

Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected every three months by the responsible person.

A check is also made every three months of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or is protected against breakage.

In addition to these regular checks, any defects noted by or reported to any responsible person are immediately reported to a Churchwarden or the Rector who will ensure that procedures are put in hand for repairs.

Where necessary temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

Where necessary, any asbestos will be removed by an appointed contractor. Information regarding any asbestos remaining in the building will be given to all contractors and anyone else who may be affected.

## 12. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

We adopt the House of Bishops' Policy on safeguarding children 'Protecting All God's Children' (4th edition 2010 or as updated). We also adopt Diocesan policy set out in 'The Protection and Safeguarding of Children – Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Good Practice for work with children and young people in parishes' (2012 or as updated).

We adopt the House of Bishops' policy on safeguarding adults 'Promoting a safe church' (2006 or as updated). We also adopt Diocesan policy set out in 'Protection and Safeguarding of Adults when they are vulnerable – Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Good Practice for Work in Parishes' (2012 or as updated).

National and Diocesan policy and guidance is published on the Diocesan website ([www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org)) and available on the site under Parish Guidance Notes.

A Parish Children's Representative and also a Parish Safeguarding Adults Representative are appointed annually by the PCC. The Parish Policy Statements for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults are also completed annually, a copy displayed in church and a copy submitted to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group. Details of the numbers and ages of the young people involved in each group and details of adult supervisors are maintained by the Rector. Parental consent forms are obtained for specified regular activities on an annual basis and also for single events and particular needs of individual children noted. A statement upholding our procedures will be made at each annual church meeting and suitably recorded. A permanent record will be maintained by the Rector of all accidents involving children.

## 14. Personal safety

Risk assessments must be undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the church or church hall, travelling to and from church, accepting persons into their homes and handling cash and other valuables. Procedures below have been drawn up to include appropriate control measures. These will be regularly reviewed.

Activity	Procedure and control measures
When working alone in church / church hall.	Notify the rector, a Churchwarden or other responsible person. Have means of communication e.g. mobile phone. Be aware and take reasonable precautions to safeguard personal safety. Observe health and safety policy regarding any maintenance work being undertaken.
When travelling to and from church	Be aware of your surroundings, particularly if carrying cash, and take reasonable precautions to safeguard personal safety.
When accepting people into your home	Do not invite unknown persons into your home except by prior appointment. Notify a responsible person if you are alone when inviting unknown persons into your home. Be aware and take reasonable precautions to safeguard personal safety when inviting people into your home. Maintain ease of access to a telephone should the need arise for summoning assistance
When handling cash and valuables	Cash taken during church services should be counted and checked by two people, and clear records maintained. Where this

	<p>is not immediately possible, cash should be stored in the vestry safe. Cash taken during fundraising events should be collected and counted by the treasurer or a responsible deputy and clear records maintained. Cash should be banked weekly</p> <p>At least two people should undertake the banking of large sums (£500 or more). Church valuables, including records, should be held in one of the church safes or in the clergy vestry when not in use. Cash temporarily held at the home of the Rector, treasurer, or a designated person should not exceed £1500. Such cash should be banked as soon as possible. Cash in collection boxes in church should be emptied frequently.</p>
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## 15. Risk Assessment / activities

Risk assessments will be carried out on all areas of the church premises and all activities that carry a significant risk at regular intervals by a competent person in order to meet our obligation under The Management of Health & Safety at Work 1999.

For all hazardous activities a risk assessment is carried out and procedures implemented to minimise hazards that must be followed.

The following activities require risk assessments. Procedures below have been drawn up to include appropriate control measures. These will be regularly reviewed.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Procedures and control measures</b>
Fetes including the use of bouncy castles	All games and activities should be erected with appropriate regard to safety for both the public and the operator. Appropriate precautions should be taken during operation of the activities to avoid accidents. Activities should be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. Any accident should be reported immediately to the event organiser and a record kept in the accident book. Food and drinks should be served with regard to good food hygiene practice. Cash payment for refreshments should be made to a 'cashier'.
Tower tours	Tower tours must be supervised by at least one authorised adult. Tower visitors must not be left unsupervised at any time and the number of visitors allowed at any one time will be limited to maintain safety and adequate supervision. Children under the age of 16 years must be accompanied by another responsible adult. Children under the age of 8 years are not allowed to visit the tower. Visitors must be advised that the tour will require them to climb up and down the tower steps. The tour supervisor may refuse entry to any person on health and safety grounds.
Bell ringing	The doors to the ringing chamber and the bell chamber must be kept locked against unauthorised entry when the tower is unattended. A sign or other indication should be present whenever persons are in the tower at a higher level. No one should work alone in the tower whether the bells are up or down. Working in the bell chamber should be avoided when the bells are up. Muffles should be put on clappers only when the bells are down. Non-ringing visitors must be accompanied by

	ringers. Only appointed experienced ringers can be responsible for teaching. Inexperienced visiting ringers must have experienced ringer stands close behind. The Rector, Churchwardens and Tower Captain must be aware of and follow the full guidance from The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers regarding day to day health and safety and also the health and safety guidance during repairs and alterations.
Sponsored walks, visits and outings	Details about proposed outings and walks should be made available in advance in church with particular regard to time, route, length of walk and terrain, suitable clothing required and appropriateness for different age groups. The organiser should have a list of participants with any necessary emergency contact numbers. Participants in sponsored activities should use sponsor forms specific to the activity. They should observe reasonable precautions during the activities to avoid accidents and safeguard personal safety.
Churchyard maintenance	Grass cutting is carried out by Council staff. Working parties carrying out additional maintenance work should observe the contents of this policy particularly in relation to policy sections 5, 8, 10 and 14.
Erection of temporary staging	The modular staging should be erected by at least two people. All sections should be correctly fitted together and steps placed in a suitable position to enable unencumbered access. Staging should be no more than two levels high, the second level to be used for seating only.

## 16. Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purpose of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors including the self-employed must abide by the following:

- have their own Health & Safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same
- produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employers' liability insurance in place and a record of this evidence must be maintained
- comply with all the requirements of this Health & Safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation
- where plant and machinery is brought onto church premises by contractors they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation
- contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officials but responsibility will remain with the contractors
- all contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake and this 'permit to work' will also specify any safety procedures they must undertake

Certain work to the church will be subject to responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) or CDM Regulations, including new buildings, alterations, repairs, restoration, temporary structures and re-decoration and conservation work. The Churchwardens or other competent person will ensure that the necessary arrangements are put in hand under the Construction (Design and

Management) Regulations 2007. A project is notifiable to HSE if the construction phase a) lasts for more than 30 days, or b) involves more than 500 person days of work and additional obligations exist. The Church Architect will be consulted as appropriate. The term "Architect" where used in this document shall include a suitably qualified Chartered Building Surveyor should the PCC wish to appoint such a person instead of a Chartered Architect.

## **17. Information and enforcement**

### **Dartford Borough Council**

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing health and safety at places of worship. Our enforcing authority is Dartford Borough Council which can be contacted for information and advice.

Environmental Health Service Information can also be obtained from Dartford Borough Council

Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, DA1 1DR.  
Tel: 01322 343434. Emergency (out of hours): 08456 34122

### **Health and Safety Executive**

Under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) there is a statutory requirement to report certain types of accident, dangerous occurrences and disease to the Health and Safety Executive. Reports should be submitted online or for fatal and major injuries by telephone 0845 300 9923.

The Health and Safety Executive can also be contacted to obtain advice through the Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS)

The local office of the Health & Safety Executive can be contacted at International House, Dover Place, Ashford, TW23 1HU. Information Line 01233 653900 Fax 01233 634827

## **18. Health & Safety law poster**

A copy of the HSE poster 'Health and Safety Law – what you should know' is displayed in church.