



Health & Safety Policy

Document history

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Approved by
3.0	31JUL23	Roger Moore	PCC
2.0	31OCT19		
1.0	31MAR08		

Next review date: **July 2025**

Issued by:

St Barnabas: the parish church for Emmer Green and Caversham Park
Grove Road, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA
www.saintbarnabas.org.uk
vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk
0118 947 5214
Registered charity no. 1164759

Contents

1	General statement of Health and Safety policy.....	3
2	Organization and Responsibilities	4
2.1	Responsibility of the Vicar, Churchwardens, and Parochial Church Council.....	4
2.2	Responsibility of Health and Safety Officer	4
2.3	Responsibility of Voluntary Workers and Church Personnel.....	5
3	Arrangements	5
3.1	Accidents and First Aid	5
3.2	General Fire Safety	6
3.2.1	Fire Extinguishers	6
3.2.2	Fire alarm system	6
3.2.3	Fire blankets	6
3.3	Emergency Evacuation Procedures	7
3.3.1	Fire Safety Reviews.....	7
3.4	Electrical Safety	7
3.5	Gas Equipment Safety	8
3.6	Safety of Plant and Machinery	8
3.7	Slips, Trips and Falls	8
3.8	Lighting.....	9
3.9	Working at Heights or High Levels	9
3.10	Risk Assessment (Interior)	9
3.11	Risk Assessment (Exterior).....	10
3.12	Preparation of Food	10
3.13	Manual Handling.....	11
3.14	Handling and Carrying of Cash.....	11
3.15	Contractors.....	11
4	Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults	12

1 General statement of Health and Safety policy

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all, and to provide such information, training and supervision as may be needed 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 premises comprising: the Church, the Parish Centre, the Church Hall, the Church grounds and outhouses.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements, which we will make to implement the policy, are set out further in this policy document.

In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on health and safety will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council and sub committees where they exist.

A copy of this Statement and the Employers and Public Liability insurance are displayed on the church notice board.

Signed: 

Revd Kevin Lovell, Vicar
July 2023

2 Organization and Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibility of the Vicar, Churchwardens, and Parochial Church Council

The Vicar, the Revd Kevin Lovell has overall responsibility for Health and Safety. He will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy the Health and Safety At Work etc Act 1974; Health and Safety Regulations; and appropriate Codes of Practice.

He will be assisted by the Churchwardens.

The Vicar and Churchwardens will be supported by members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) who have a corporate responsibility to ensure the Health and Safety Policy is implemented and will authorise any delegation of specific responsibilities under that policy.

2.2 Responsibility of Health and Safety Officer

The PCC appoints a Health and Safety Officer whose role is an advisory one principally to the Vicar, Churchwardens and the PCC.

The H&S Officer will be expected to be familiar with Health and Safety matters:

- Regulations as far as they concern Church premises and associated activities
- Policy and arrangements, and advise on their implementation.
- Review and prepare a statement detailing the H&S performance for inclusion in the Annual Report to the APCM.

The H&S Officer will advise the Vicar, Churchwardens, and PCC so that they ensure:

- so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place
- the Church premises are clean and tidy
- 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
- that adequate access and egress is maintained
- fire-fighting equipment is available and maintained
- that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed

2.3 Responsibility of Voluntary Workers and Church Personnel

The Responsible Persons, all other volunteers and church personnel have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this Health and Safety Policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises.

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 Responsible person
- report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible
- not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

3 Arrangements

Arrangements to minimise as far as practicable risks to the health and safety of voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors and contractors are

3.1 Accidents and First Aid

First Aid Boxes are located in:

- Church Hall (Kitchen)
- Church (Choir and Vicar's Vestries)
- Parish Centre (Main room on the wall)

Trained/qualified First Aiders shall be listed on the notice board in the Parish Centre.

Accident Books are located in:

- Church Hall (adjacent First Aid Box)
- Parish Centre kitchen

All accidents and incidents are to be entered in the Accident Books or an Accident Report Form, and where appropriate our insurers advised.

If the Church premises are let to an outside organisation, it is to be told in writing that in the event of an accident, details must be entered in the appropriate Accident Book.

Accident books and accident records shall be regularly reviewed.

3.2 General Fire Safety

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2015, which requires:

- reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk of fire, and
- steps are taken to make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.

In order to achieve this, the following have been undertaken:

- A formal Risk Assessment of the fire risks in the Church premises.
- 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 provision of emergency lighting.
- Provision of reasonable fire-fighting equipment plus competency training

A two-monthly visual check that our fire-fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

3.2.1 Fire Extinguishers

Fire Extinguishers are in the following locations:

Church

- Prayer room of the Church: Foam – 6 litre
- Chancel (Audio/visual area): Powder – 2 kg
- Clergy Vestry: Carbon Dioxide – 2 kg
- Choir Vestry: Water – 6 litre
- Parish Centre: 6litre Water and 2 kg CO2

Church Hall

- Kitchen area: Carbon Dioxide – 2kg
- Adjacent main hall fire escape door: Water – 6 litre
- Adjacent entrance/exit door: Foam – 6 litre

The extinguishers are checked every 2 months by the Responsible Person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged.

Chubb Fire Security Ltd (or another suitably qualified contractor) checks and services the extinguishers noted above annually.

3.2.2 Fire alarm system

The Parish Centre has a fire alarm system which is checked weekly and details recorded.

3.2.3 Fire blankets

Fire blankets are provided in the Church Hall and Parish Centre kitchens.

3.3 Emergency Evacuation Procedures

If you discover a fire (no matter how small):

- Immediately raise the alarm (in the Parish Centre the automatic alarm system may have operated)
- Telephone 999 or 112 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service
- Check the building for occupants
- Attack the fire if possible within your capability using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risks
- If not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguishers to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring all doors are closed behind you.
- the general rule is people before property
- If possible ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

For the larger services, meetings and concerts our procedures for stewarding and/or evacuation are as follows:

- All designated fire doors must be unlocked and checked that they can be opened before the service/event commences.
- A trained Steward must be allotted to each exit door and have responsibility for persons leaving that door.
- Emergency lighting is not available; torches are available for Stewards in the Church.
- In the event of an Emergency (fire/bomb threat etc) an announcement to leave the building will be made by a member of the Ministry Team or Churchwarden.
- Prior to the event commencing an announcement shall be made to the Congregation or Audience identifying emergency exits and procedures.
- In the event of an evacuation, persons shall assemble on the grassed area on the other side of Grove Road.
- The emergency services shall be contacted by a nominated person.

3.3.1 Fire Safety Reviews

A Fire Safety Review and Audit will be conducted every two years and a report submitted to the PCC for approval.

3.4 Electrical Safety

A list of portable electrical appliances is to be maintained by the appropriate Responsible Person

Every year the Responsible person shall ensure a visual inspection is carried out of the fixed electrical installations (e.g. wires, sockets, and fuse board) and also that plugs cables and sockets are inspected to ensure there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. The Responsible person shall ensure all necessary actions are undertaken. The Responsible Person shall maintain a log of inspection dates.

Every year all our portable equipment will be tested by a competent Electrical Contractor to ensure all appliances are safe.

Every 5 years, the fixed electrical appliances and installations will be inspected and tested by a competent Electrical Contractor. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out.

It is our policy not to sell any second hand electrical goods unless a suitably qualified person has inspected them.

Where outdoor electrical equipment is being used (e.g. hedge cutters), such equipment must be connected to the mains supply by way of a socket with a RCD fitting or by use of RCD adaptors which are supplied.

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

- Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- Report all faults as soon as possible to the Responsible Person e.g. burning smells, overheating, or buzzing noises from appliances.
- Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment.
- Position and protect flexible cables so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

3.5 Gas Equipment Safety

Our gas boilers and other gas equipment is maintained and checked annually by a competent and certified contractor. Any necessary work required for safety is implemented immediately.

3.6 Safety of Plant and Machinery

The following apply to electrical and mechanical equipment on site:

- Volunteers must not operate machinery that they have not been trained and authorised to use.
- Machinery must be switched off before any adjustments are made.
- Where necessary the appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when operating any item of machinery.
- Persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to operate any item of machinery.
- Ladders may only be used when they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties or two person operation.
- Any defect or damage found to any item of machinery or equipment must be reported to the Responsible Person.

3.7 Slips, Trips and Falls

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, an inspection will be made every 3 months by the Responsible Person of all floors and steps in the Church premises. Any defects shall be reported to a church warden who will arrange for remedial measures to be carried out.

3.8 Lighting

All lights in the Church and the Church Hall will be inspected periodically by the Responsible Person to ensure that they are working. Any bulbs that have failed should be reported to the Churchwardens who will arrange for them to be replaced.

3.9 Working at Heights or High Levels

The following areas are designated as high levels:

Interior:

- Main Body of the Church – work to a maximum height of the Wall Plate
- Chancel – work to a maximum height of the apex of the arch [or to replace light bulbs when necessary]

Exterior:

- Work within the maximum height of the gutters of the Church
- Work within the maximum height of the gutters of the Hall
- Work within the maximum height of the gutters of the Parish Centre

NB Work above these specified heights or outside these areas will need a separate Risk Assessment before any such work may be authorised

3.10 Risk Assessment (Interior)

Work at the high levels specified relates mainly to the replacement of light bulbs. This work should not be routinely required with the introduction of long lasting LED lights. Access to other parts of the building at a high level by a volunteer is only very occasionally required, or access may be needed by contractors who will be responsible for their own Health and Safety arrangements.

Only the following persons may work at the designated high levels using fixed extension ladders:

- Approved Contractors
- Named individuals who are competent to work at height with a competent assistant.

Under no circumstances will any one individual be permitted to work at height unaccompanied within the Church Building.

3.11 Risk Assessment (Exterior)

Historically, working at height involving the exterior of the building, has largely involved volunteers clearing the guttering of the Church Hall and occasionally the Church Building.

The clearing of guttering of the Church Hall is largely seasonal, the guttering being subject to significant deposits of autumn leaves from nearby trees. The guttering is at a height of some 14/15 feet from ground level and access can be reached quite comfortably by use of a suitably sized portable extension ladder. The ground around the hall is level and there are no obvious hazards preventing good footing.

Where maintenance work is being done from ladders it is the policy of the Church for there to be a minimum of 2 persons present, one person in support of the volunteer working from the ladder. Where possible the ladder should be tied off at height for additional stability.

It is the responsibility of the named person to arrange a suitable assistant when requiring to do work.

Only the following persons may work at the designated high levels using fixed extension ladders:

- Approved Contractors
- Named individuals who are competent to work at height with a competent assistant.

Any other work at height, other than that specified above, must be the subject of a separate Risk Assessment.

3.12 Preparation of Food

The Church Hall and Parish Centre shall be registered with the Environmental Services Directorate, Reading Borough Council, in accordance with The Food Premises (Registration) Regulations 1999.

We shall ensure that where necessary we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and when necessary the storage of foodstuffs.

Before any preparation commences, all surfaces with which food comes into contact must be washed down and disinfected.

Foodstuffs should normally only be prepared in the following areas:

- Kitchen in the Church Hall
- Kitchen in the Parish Centre

Where possible only persons who have received the appropriate training should prepare and serve foodstuffs on the premises (other than light refreshments).

We will ensure the Kitchen areas are kept clean, hygienic and that kitchen linen is changed on a regular basis.

We will ensure that all hirers who wish to serve foodstuffs are advised about the facilities and procedures.

We will maintain records of checks and operations in the kitchens.

3.13 Manual Handling

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 or equipment, the use of lifting aids must be used as far as it is reasonably practicable.

3.14 Handling and Carrying of Cash

Our policy is to restrict the keeping and handling of cash on the premises to a minimum at all times.

Where cash on the premises is being counted, collated, or checked in any way, at least 2 responsible persons must be present at all times.

Cash held on the premises must be kept locked in the Church safe at all times.

Where cash is removed from the premises, or is in transit in excess of £5000, at least 2 able bodied persons must be in attendance at all times. This is an insurance requirement and must be complied with.

No sum of cash belonging to the Church shall routinely be kept overnight in a private home in excess of £500.

3.15 Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than a voluntary worker of the Church, will be regarded as a Contractor. All Contractors, including self-employed, must abide by the following:

- Have their own health and safety policy (where required) and be able to provide a copy of the same.
- Produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employers' liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained.
- Comply with all requirements of this Health and 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 the 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. However, responsibility will remain with the Contractor.
- 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. This "permit to work" will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake.

4 Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Church of England and the Oxford Diocese have produced a series of principles and recommended model policies which are the basis of extensive guidance on the steps each Parish should take in relation to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Full details may be viewed on the Oxford Diocesan website

www.oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding .

A separate detailed local safeguarding policy to implement these recommendations will be maintained and displayed in the Parish Centre and Church Hall.

The PCC appoints a Parish Safeguarding Officer to oversee training as appropriate and who shares responsibility for safeguarding with the Vicar