

## **St. Helen's Church Health & Safety Guidelines 2016**

The success of these guidelines will depend on the co-operation of members of the church. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

Every member must:-

- Take all reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take all reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- Co-operate to enable the Church to meet its obligations
- Report all perceived hazards and remove or reduce them where appropriate
- Not misuse any equipment or article provided.

### **Section A General Statement**

Our aim, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment in the areas we as a church are responsible for, namely the church, the Cottage & heritage centre and the Garden of Remembrance and flower borders in the churchyard. We recognise that we owe a general duty of care to those working in, volunteering in, or visiting our premises.

All members of St Helen's Parochial Church Council ('the PCC') will be given a copy of the guidelines to familiarise themselves with them and to allow them to assist in ensuring a healthy and safe environment is maintained.

These guidelines will be reviewed and kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings, activities or relevant legislation.

### **Section B Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Incumbent who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy health and safety regulations and appropriate code of practice.

The churchwardens must ensure that arrangements outlined in the policy are carried out and updated as necessary

The PCC has general responsibility to ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented, regularly reviewed and risk assessments updated

It is the responsibility of employees and volunteers to co-operate in the implantation of the policy, to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to comply with safety rules, operating instructions, procedures and training.

Responsibility for health and safety is delegated in specific areas as follows:

Bell Ringing, bells and belfry	Tower Captain
Child Protection	Incumbent & Child Protection Officer
Choir	Director of Music
Churchyard and Garden Of Remembrance	partly covered by the Town Council
Organ Maintenance and blower	Director of Music
Sound amplification system	Sound Co-ordinator
Routine testing of fire extinguishers, electrical supply and portable appliances	Churchwardens

Contractors with maintenance responsibilities:

Where contractors are employed the PCC will only look to use appropriate contractors who have demonstrated their ability and intention to contribute towards a healthy and safe environment in the church, Cottage and heritage centre

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

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise as far as is reasonably practicable 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 heritage centre and church welcome desk.

All accidents, incidents and near misses are to be entered in the accident book, located in the church welcome desk.

Where our insurers should be advised, an accident report form is to be completed; and if appropriate we will comply with statutory HSE reporting (currently RIDDOR reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations 2013)

A specimen Accident Report Form is included as Appendix three.

Accident records will be reviewed 6 monthly by Churchwardens.

If the church, Cottage or heritage centre is hired to outside organisations, they are to be told, in writing, that in the event of an accident details must be entered in the accident book.

## 2. Fire Safety

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005 to reduce the risk of fire occurring at St Helen's and to ensure that in the unlikely event of a fire there will be a swift and safe evacuation of the buildings

This will be achieved through:

- a) An assessment of the fire risks in the church, Cottage and heritage centre to be carried out from time to time as a specific exercise and also as part of the annual general maintenance of fire fighting equipment. Recommendations to reduce fire risk should be carried out as appropriate.
- b) Ensuring a means of raising the alarm if a fire is detected
- c) Ensuring that people who may be in the building can get out safely, and are aware of the action to take in the event of a fire.
- d) Ensuring that those using the building know what to do in the event of a fire
- e) Providing sufficient fire fighting equipment to support the evacuation of the premises.
- f) A monthly check by the Churchwardens that the fire fighting equipment is in place and has not been discharged. In addition there will an annual maintenance contract with a reputable company.
- g) Evacuation Procedures  
For services and concerts our procedures for stewarding evacuation are detailed at appendix 1 – sidesmen and welcomers should be familiar with these, and will receive regular training.
- h) Evacuation Drills  
A practice drill should be carried out annually during a service to test our evacuation procedures

If You Discover a Fire (no matter how small)

- Immediately raise the alarm.
- Telephone the emergency services (address and postcode is displayed.)
- If safe, check the building for occupants (but do not re-enter a building when a fire is established).
- If confident, attack the fire using the appliances provided, but without taking 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. People are more important than property!
- Evacuate to the designated assembly point (the car park in Upper Church Street).
- Ensure pedestrians are clear of the access for emergency vehicles.
- Advise people in neighbouring properties.

### **3. Electrical Safety**

A list of portable electrical appliances to be maintained.

People using portable electrical equipment must ensure that the equipment appears to be safe and in good working order. Any unsatisfactory equipment should be removed from use and reported to the Churchwardens immediately for proper repair or replacement.

Churchwardens to conduct quarterly visual check on portable electrical items to identify faulty or damaged equipment.

Portable electrical equipment will be tested (PAT) in line with current HSE guidelines on a bi-annual inspection by a qualified person using the correct test equipment.

No portable electrical equipment is to be brought onto the premises and used unless it has been tested.

Fixed electrical system to be inspected or tested by competent contractor every five years.

Lightning conductor system to be checked by competent contractor every four years.

### **4. Gas Equipment Safety**

The gas boiler is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is a GasSafe registered gas installer.

Any necessary work required for safety will be undertaken as a priority.

### **5. Hazardous Substances**

We aim to eliminate the use of hazardous substances. Where substances which represent a mild risk have to be used (e.g. cleaning materials) those using such substances will store them safely in the original containers, and use them in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **6. Safety of Plant and Machinery**

The only current items of plant and machinery (excluding electrical items and the gas boiler - see above for maintenance arrangements for these) are the clock with electric winding mechanism and the organ.

Clock and electric winding mechanism are housed in a separate room above the locked bell-ringing chamber. Churchwardens will allocate responsibility for carrying out routine maintenance and ensuring safe working practices.

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The Director of Music is responsible for safe working practices and maintenance concerning the organ.

## **7. Bells and Bell Tower**

The Responsible Person is the Tower Captain who, together with assistance from his team, will give attention to ropes and guides and minor repairs, adjustments and maintenance to the bells and bell-frames.

No one is to work in the bell tower unaccompanied.

A separate policy relating to the Bells and the Bell Tower is included as Appendix 2.

An approved contractor will be engaged to undertake all other work and we will satisfy ourselves that the contractor has assessed likely risks and taken all necessary steps to carry out the work safely.

## **8. Churchyard**

General maintenance is the responsibility of the Town Council. The Churchwardens will ensure that safe working practices apply to the Garden of Remembrance.

## **9. Slips, Trips and Falls**

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, PCC members will be observant for and report any potential issues with floors and stairs in the church, Cottage and heritage centre and all paths and steps in the churchyard.

Any defects are to be reported to the Churchwardens who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

People should be advised to take particular care on the steps accessing the priestroom, especially when carrying items to or from storage.

All floor coverings, furniture, equipment and electrical cabling to be maintained in such a way as to minimise trip hazards.

Thoroughfares to be kept clear at all times.

## **10. Lighting**

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, the members of the PCC will regularly check that lights are working. All necessary replacements will be reported to the Churchwardens.

## **11. Working at High Levels**

The Churchwardens will ensure that appropriate care and precautions are taken when working at heights, and that the maximum duration will be 30 minutes.

No-one to work at high levels unaccompanied.

## **12. Manual Handling (Lifting, carrying and moving loads)**

Activity which involves manual handling will be kept to a minimum and will be supervised by someone aware of correct lifting procedure.

## **13. Food Safety**

The appropriate Food Hygiene Regulations governing the preparation and storage of food will be adhered to.

We ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training. Only people who have received appropriate training will be allowed to prepare and cook foodstuffs.

We ensure the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperature.

Food preparation will only take place in the kitchen area and all surfaces coming into contact with food will be washed down and disinfected prior to use.

We ensure that hirers who wish to prepare food will be advised of the facilities and procedures.

## **14. Personal Safety**

Risk Assessments to be undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the church, accepting persons into their homes and handling cash and other valuables.

People working alone should have a means of summoning assistance (e.g. mobile phone) and if necessary remove themselves from any potentially dangerous situation.

Those employees and volunteers who work alone will be made aware of the Lone Worker Policy and Guidance and will be invited to Lone Worker Awareness training.

## **15. Activities and other areas where we may need to have procedures in place**

For all hazardous activities, we will carry out risk assessments and produce procedures that must be followed. These procedures need to be based on specific circumstances.

However, there are guidelines produced by Ecclesiastical Insurance in their Guidance Notes for Churches.

The following activities, in particular will require risk assessments. Procedures will need to be documented and stored with the master copy of this health and safety policy.

- Fetes, including the use of Bouncy Castles
- Tower Tours
- Sponsored Walks, outings and visits
- Special events
- etc.

## 16. Contractors

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

- Have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same.
- Produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained.
- Comply with all the 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 contractors.
- All contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake.

**Last reviewed by the PCC on 17th January 2017**

Signed by the incumbent:.....

Signed by the Churchwarden.....

Signed by the Churchwarden .....

To be reviewed annually

## Appendix 1: **Evacuation procedures**

Exits available for evacuation are the north door, south door and external vestry door. Routes to these doors must be kept clear at all times. The exit via the belfry is not an acceptable escape route due to the steps.

The north and south doors will both be unlocked prior to a service, concert or event. Keys to the external vestry door will be carried by the Verger and Wardens and one will be available on a hook by the door.

Hi vis jackets, torches and a megaphone are all available and will be put out in preparation as required.

Sidesmen or stewards on duty will take the lead as fire marshals in the event of an emergency, assisted by all other trained volunteers

Evacuation role cards are stored in the name badge box, with spare copy in the vestry, and roles will be allocated swiftly by the lead fire marshals.

In the event of an emergency an announcement to leave the building will be made by the senior member of clergy present, the churchwarden, the verger or event organiser.

All exits will be used providing it is safe to do so to swiftly and calmly evacuate the building. A marshal must be allotted to each door and will direct the evacuation of persons via the nearest exit to them.

Marshals will ask members of the congregation or audience to offer assistance to those at risk, such as the elderly, people with mobility issues or those with young families.

Leaders of young people's groups, choir, etc will take responsibility for the evacuation of those in their charge and will reunite them with parents or carers at the fire assembly point.

If safe to do so checks will be made that all areas of the building, including Priestroom, Cottage and heritage centre, toilets etc are clear.

Fire extinguishers will be used by those confident to do so to facilitate an evacuation only.

A marshal will direct people to the fire assembly point in the car park off Upper Church Street, getting them away from the church building as swiftly as possible, with someone designated to keep people safely away from the road.

The emergency services will be called by a nominated person– the address and postcode is displayed in the church. The main gate to the churchyard must be kept clear of pedestrians for emergency vehicles.

Residents in neighbouring properties will be advised of the emergency.

**Note: There may be certain emergency situations where it is safer to remain inside rather than evacuate and to offer refuge in the church building, if necessary locking the doors.**

## Appendix 2

### Safety Policy Relating to the Bells and the Bell Tower

1. No-one must enter the chamber while the bells are set or being rung.
2. Prior to entering or undertaking any work anywhere in the bell chamber the bells must be rung down by two competent persons.
3. The tower captain will 'authorise' persons to be competent to ring any particular bell up or down.
4. No-one will work unaccompanied in the bell tower other than at ground level.
5. All visitors will at all times be closely supervised while in the tower.
6. The visitor to supervisor ratio will be no more than six to one.
7. Any child will count as two persons for the ratio above (6) and at least 2 adults must be in the visitor group.
8. Access to the tower will be controlled by key holders at certain specific access points.
  - (a) tower door ground level
  - (b) clock chamber
  - (c) bell chamber
  - (d) roof door
9. Key holders will be agreed and appointed by: the Incumbent, the Tower Captain and the Churchwardens.
10. All work carried out in the bell tower will be noted in the log provided. The log will detail the person authorising the work, those present along with dates, times and details of the work performed.

# Appendix 3

## Accident Report Form

Sheet	<b>ACCIDENT/INJURY RECORD SHEET</b>	No.	Book No.
	Date of Accident/Injury		
	<b>Casualty details</b>		
	Name		
	Address		
		Post code	
	Occupation		
	Telephone		
Date	<b>Accident/Injury details - Where and when did it happen?</b>		
	Time	Location	
	Equipment/Machinery involved		
	<b>What happened? (include the cause and nature of accident/injury)</b>		
	Signed	Date	
	<b>Treatment given, if known</b>		
	Signed	Date	
Name of Casualty	<b>Your details, if different from above</b>		
	Name		
	Address		
		Post code	
	Occupation		
Ballhall	Signed	Date	