

# St John's Church, Old Moulsham - Health and Safety Policy

## June 2024

As a church we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church, hall or churchyard.

We also know that, where we are an employer (be that paid staff or volunteers) or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of Health and Safety law. In particular, we know that if we are an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The policy the procedures relating to fire safety are covered separately.

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors, hirers and others who may use the church, churchyard and church hall. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts its overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

In respect of the church, we will appoint a member of the PCC to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation, and the Church Hall committee will also appoint a member to ensure its implementation on behalf of the PCC. We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be retained both on the church website and in the church, for ready access.

Signed\*: *Hannah Robinson (Revd)*

Date: 11th June 2024

\*on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at the Standing Committee meeting on

## ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is: Will May.**  
**The member of the Church Hall Committee ensuring its implementation on the PCC's behalf is: *Stephen Hogben*.**

### **They will ensure that:**

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

2. **The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.** In 2024 they are: Will May and Nanette Wright.

### **They will ensure that:**

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments
- Adequate information and training is provided for those that need it
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

3. **All employees and volunteers** have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

### **They will ensure that they:**

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with
- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
- Report any accident
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

## ARRANGEMENTS

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks. We have removed any points that do not apply to our activities.

### General Arrangements:

**Competent Assistance:** Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations. Where an appointment is made, we will record the details here.

***Until we appoint a Health and Safety Officer, this responsibility rests with the Churchwardens.***

**Risk Assessment:** We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

**Information and Training:** We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided **and who has received training**. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

***First Aid: We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements, although it may not always be possible to have a trained first aider in attendance at every service or event . We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.***

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is: ..... (In 2024 there was no designated person, so responsibility rests with the churchwardens.)

***The church's two First Aid boxes are kept on top of the fridge in the downstairs kitchen and in the upstairs kitchen, and the Church Hall's is in the Hall's kitchen.***

**Accident Reporting:** We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

The church's Accident Book is kept on top of the fridge in the kitchen, and the Church Hall's is in the kitchen.

**Monitoring:** We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will ensure the relevant people are trained in relation to general health and safety matters eg working from height and fire safety, and keep records of the checks we make.

**Contractors:** If we employ contractors, we make sure that they have their own health & safety policy and public and Employers Liability Insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

**Record Keeping:** *All Health and Safety Risk Assessments are readily available to view, and are kept in a folder at the back of the church. Other records and documents relating to the church (eg asbestos reports, visual inspection reports etc) are kept in the church office filing cabinet.)*

All Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents relating to the church are kept together at the back of the church for ready access by all. Similarly those relating to the hall are stored there.

## **Specific arrangements**

**Asbestos:** We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then implement any plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made.

**Church Buildings:** We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe, through the Quinquennial Inspections. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

**Churchyard:** The Churchyard is closed and so Chelmsford City Council is responsible for ensuring:

- boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair
- trees are inspected by a competent person and ensuring that any necessary work is carried out to make them safe
- headstones, tombs and monuments are checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained.

We will report any concerns to the Chelmsford City Council.

**Construction Work:** Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

**Display Screen Equipment:** Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

**Electricity:** We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliance is maintained so as to prevent danger. We will ensure that the

- electrical system inspections every 5 years
- PAT tests (portable appliance tests) are undertaken every 2½ years
- Lightning conductor is checked annually
- Fire alarm is checked annually
- Fire extinguishers are checked 6 monthly and serviced every 5 years
- Lift is serviced annually

Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

**Events:** Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

**Fire:** We will maintain up to date emergency fire and evacuation procedures *which should be available on the wall by the church doors, and managing fire safety will be incorporated into all risk assessments*. Periodic fire safety assessments will be undertaken to ensure that our overall fire safety arrangements and procedures are adequate.

**Heating Systems:** We will ensure that the Church Hall's gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made.

**Hazardous Substances:** We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking, any necessary precautions that are specified. Where gas canisters are stored at the Hall, they will be stored in a shed

**Lifting Equipment:** We will ensure that any lifting equipment is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.

**Manual Handling:** We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as, trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.

**Preparation of Food:** We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, and clean utensils and equipment, and that all staff/volunteers have food hygiene training as needed. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste. Separate guidance is available for JubiLatte Cafe activities. Training of Cafe volunteers is ongoing is recorded in the main Jubilate file in the cafe.

**Slips and Trips:** We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as, hand rails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

**Working at Height:** Where possible we will try and avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used. Please refer to Appendix 1 'Working From Height' for details.

**Work Equipment:** Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as, ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

**Working Alone:** We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety. ***Lone working should be undertaken only as an exception, rather than a rule and the church Lone Working guidance must be followed.***

## Appendix 1: Working at Height Safety Guidance

The church Health and Safety Policy document adopted by the Churchwardens and PCC states:

"Where possible we will try and avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used."

The purpose of this Working at Height guidance appendix is to expand on this requirement and provide more details of specific arrangements. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy document for information on organisation and responsibilities, and general arrangements.

### ARRANGEMENTS

The guidance here is based upon the Ecclesiastical Church Guidance Note "Working at height" (04/2022), with the addition of examples and notes on applicability to St John's Church.

#### **1. Avoid the need for work at height in the first place e.g. completing from ground level:**

- There are long-handled dusters and brushes in the under-stairs cupboard that can be used for cleaning up to at least 4m, and higher with extension poles. It is accepted that the nave roof beams etc. that are beyond reach will not be cleaned regularly
- Churchyard maintenance is the responsibility of the City Council, so high work needed to trees or hedges should be reported to them and not attempted by church volunteers
- The PCC employs contractors for high level work on the building such as gutter clearance and roof repairs
- The public are not admitted to the tower.

#### **2. Ensure that any work at height is properly planned in advance taking account of any safety precautions that are needed, and complete a risk assessment identifying the precautions you need to take:**

- There are existing Risk Assessments for regular activities. Hardcopies are kept in a folder at the back of the nave, and are also stored online (ask a churchwarden to send a link). If a planned activity or event is not covered by one of the existing Risk Assessments then create a new one in conjunction with the churchwardens.
- The Risk Assessments for activities or events that may involve working at height also identify specific risk mitigations. e.g.
  - RA Cleaning Day Event
  - General Services and Events- Indoors
  - RA Churchyard General Services Events and Maintenance

#### **3. Use existing places at height to work from where these are suitable (i.e. they have safe access, protected edges etc.):**

- Not currently applicable to St John's (but may be created during future building works).

#### **4. Use suitable access equipment depending upon the nature and duration of the work:**

- A small 3-step stepladder is kept in the under-stairs cupboard and should be used for changing light bulbs in the lounge or reaching the high circuit breakers in the cupboard. Chairs should not be used for standing on.
- A taller stepladder is kept in the Robing Vestry for hooking banners above the entrance door
- Longer ladders are kept in the Robing Vestry for changing lower light bulbs in the nave
- A scaffold tower is kept in the Robing Vestry for changing higher light bulbs in the nave.

**5. Provide adequate edge protection (i.e. handrails, toe boards) to working platforms and access routes at height:**

- Not applicable to St John's volunteers. (Contractors to manage their own safety arrangements).

**6. Provide safe access to places of work at height:**

- The tower roof is accessed by ladders. The timber ones have been replaced with metal ones that are fixed.
- A heavy duty loft ladder with handrails has been installed for access to the upstairs storage area (to replace use of a loose ladder).

**7. Avoid the need for work on or near fragile surfaces:**

- There is a plan to replace the roof over the organ blower cupboard (used for storage) with a solid one
- In the meantime only volunteers who are familiar with the boarded areas access this space and keep away from the fragile area.

**8. Provide information and training on the safe use of access equipment:**

- Information sheets for the access equipment (loft ladder, scaffolding tower) are kept in a file in the office and new users of the equipment are made aware of their location
- New users are instructed on how to use the equipment by a churchwarden or an existing user.

**9. Periodic inspection of access equipment and records:**

- The step ladders, loft ladder, and scaffolding tower are to be visually inspected by the user before each use
- The churchwardens will check the equipment every month and sign a log, which is kept with the other records in the church office.