



Health & Safety Policy and guidelines for safe working

The Church of King Charles the Martyr Potters Bar

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Signed: *P W Townsend*

Phil Townsend (Churchwarden) on behalf of the PCC

August 2025

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Further information is available in the white
Health and Safety folder which is to be found in the filing cabinet in the Parish Office

Health and Safety Officers:

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I **General Statement**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees whilst at work, contractors, volunteers, hirers and others who may be affected.

The PCC will take all reasonable steps within its power to meet these responsibilities, as far as possible, paying particular attention to the following:

- Provision and maintenance of healthy and safe premises and systems of work.
- Provision and maintenance of a working environment free of health and safety risks and provide satisfactory facilities for staff.
- Provision of adequate information, instructions, training and supervision.
- Safe arrangements in the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
- Ensuring that any machinery or equipment provided is safe and that instructions on its use are provided.
- Maintaining premises, including access and exits, in a healthy and safe condition.
- Making staff aware of what evacuation procedures to follow in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.
- Reasonable steps to avoid fire and procedures to ensure safe escape in the event of fire.

All Staff and Volunteers are to receive a copy of this document, to read in full and retain for future reference.

A volunteer may be defined as any congregation member or any other person who assists with any of the activities of the Church and the Halls on a voluntary basis.

2 Who is Responsible?

The Health and Safety Policy is determined by the PCC, which has overall responsibility for the implementation of the PCC's health and safety policy. This policy will be reviewed and updated every year. The Vicar and Lay Reader, the Church Wardens, Office Administrators and members of the Buildings Committee also have responsibility as part of their roles.

Every member of staff and every volunteer, while at work, has an obligation to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other people who may be affected by their actions.

All staff and volunteers should co-operate with the PCC to fulfil the obligation to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, by familiarising themselves with the procedures set out in this Health and Safety Policy.

Staff and volunteers are actively encouraged to make a positive contribution to the safety of their workplaces, by informing the Office, the Church Wardens or a member of staff if they become aware of any serious or dangerous situation or any shortcomings in health and safety arrangements.

Regular reports to the PCC will be made in respect of any matters affecting health or safety by the Health and Safety Officers.

3 Staff and Volunteers working on the premises

The PCC acknowledges the valuable contribution to the maintenance, repair and redecoration of the Church and the Halls provided by staff and volunteers, but it is concerned that the health and safety of all volunteers, staff and other people using the premises should be of paramount importance.

All volunteers should carry a mobile phone and learn the location and correct use of items relating to Health and Safety, such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, wheelchairs and first aid equipment.

For the safety of themselves and those they are working with they should have regard to the following at all times when working on any part of the premises and:

- **If in doubt about the safety of any operation – Stop!**
Get help – Do not take risks.
- Do not work alone where possible.
- Keep the working area as clear as possible.
- Avoid risk from trailing electric cables or hoses.
- Use adequate lighting in work areas.

- Wear appropriate protective clothing, particularly gloves, footwear and headgear, eye and ear protectors.
- Always use materials in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep children and unauthorised people away from work areas (including the kitchen). Use barriers to close off where required.
- Leave areas tidy on completion of work and put all tools away in their appointed storage place.
- Take extreme care when using flammable materials.
- Never overload electrical equipment.
- Do not use electrical tools in damp or wet conditions, unless battery operated.
- Always report any accident or injury sustained, to the Office.

Tools and Equipment

- Select the right tool or piece of equipment for the job.
- Check it is sound – never use faulty tools or equipment.
- Use it safely and carefully and only for the purpose specified by the supplier.
- Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions strictly.
- Use appropriate protective clothing, particularly footwear and a hard hat, if appropriate.
- Use appropriate eye/ear/breathing protection.
- Equipment brought temporarily on site must be in safe condition and used by competent people.
- If equipment is found or suspected to be faulty, do not use it. Label the item and enter details in the Maintenance File/ H&S Log and report it to the Office.
- Repairs to faulty equipment must be undertaken only by accredited members or contractors.

Manual Handling:

This section is particularly important for staff and volunteers moving stacks of chairs, furniture and the choir stalls

- **Stop and think** – plan the lift.
- Do not attempt to lift heavy items without help.
- Use appropriate handling aids where possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing and protection, particularly footwear.
- Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials.
- For a long lift consider resting the load mid-way.
- Position feet correctly.
- Adopt a good posture.
- Get a firm grip.
- Keep close to the load.
- Do not jerk.
- Put down first, then adjust.
- Avoid excessive fatigue.
- If in doubt, get help.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Some cleaning materials may be deemed hazardous. All such items are stored in the locked COSHH cabinet in the Cleaning Cupboard. All cleaning products are purchased through One Stop (Hertfordshire County Council) and where appropriate, safer forms are used, for example swapping an irritant cleaning product for something milder, or using a vacuum cleaner rather than a brush where appropriate or using a solid rather than liquid to avoid splashes or a waxy solid instead of a dry powder to avoid dust. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the form of rubber gloves are provided upon request.

Ladders and Step Ladders and Trestle Scaffolds and Platforms:

More information can be found in the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines which is in the white Health and Safety folder in the filing cabinet in the Office.

Visual Display Equipment – VDUs:

Staff and volunteers using VDUs should make full use of the equipment provided and adjust it to get the best from it to avoid potential health problems:

Getting Comfortable:

- Adjust the chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for work.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help to avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange the desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. Avoid directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under the desk to allow legs to move freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, especially for shorter users.

Keying in:

- Adjust the keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch the fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

Using a Mouse:

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you do not have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too hard.

- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them too hard.

Reading the Screen:

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit light conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.
- When setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye.
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focussed and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and Breaks:

- Do not sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change posture as often as practicable. Avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange the workstation).
- Take opportunities to take a break from the screen. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

4 Preparation of Food and Drink (see Food Standards Act 1999)

The Halls are equipped with an excellent and well-equipped kitchen plus a kitchenette off Meeting Room 2 and the Lounge for preparing drinks. The kitchen is regularly used for the Community Café and for preparing food for events. The person in charge of preparing food should have a certificate in Food Hygiene and anyone assisting should be trained in the basic principles of food hygiene.

- All those using the kitchen are responsible for ensuring that it is left clean and tidy.
- Any damage or broken equipment should be reported to the Halls Administrator.
- No child under 14 should be allowed in the kitchen on their own.
- Great care should be taken when using knives and sharp utensils.
- The oven, stove top, warming oven, kettle, hydra-boil and dishwasher are all potentially places for burns and scalds and equipment should be used with great care.
- Spills of water and oil, particularly, should be mopped up immediately and the kitchen users warned of the danger of slipping.
- There are first aid boxes in the kitchen and accessible toilet, and a telephone for emergencies in the Office.

5 Accidents and First Aid

Most accidents that occur on Church premises are falls as a result of uneven or slippery ground, or poor lighting. All staff and volunteers should be alert to and report any areas of concern.

External pathways should be checked for cracked or raised paving stones and slippery areas. Internally, checks should be made for damaged floors and carpets. Candle wax on the floor is a hazard in the church. The kitchen floor is particularly hazardous when wet from spills. Notices should be displayed if floors are wet.

The appointed people responsible for the first aid boxes are the Health and Safety Officers (Halls Administrators). A list of people who have up-to-date training in first aid can be found on the Church and Halls noticeboard.

Plastic disposable gloves and masks should be worn when treating bleeding injuries and when cleaning up and disposing of bodily waste.

First Aid Boxes are located:

- At the back of the kitchen
- In the Kitchenette
- At the back of the Church
- In the Choir Vestry Lobby
- In the Accessible Toilet

All accidents must be recorded in the accident book, which is located in the Accessible Toilet and reported to one of the Health and Safety Officers who are responsible for reporting accidents to the Local Authority Environmental Health Department if required. Accident Forms are to be found in or near the First Aid Boxes.

Certain workplace accidents are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

Immediate notification to the Local Authority Environmental Health Department by telephone is required if:

- *A member of the public, an employee, volunteer or self-employed person working on the premises **is killed or suffers major injury.** This must be followed up with a report form (F2508) within ten days.*
- *A written report (F2508) must also be sent to the Local Authority, Environmental Health Department within ten days of any other injury to an employee or volunteer which results in their absence from work, or being unable to do their normal work for more than three days.*

Major Injuries include, but are not limited to, fractures (other than to fingers, thumbs or toes), amputation, dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine and incidents resulting in electrical shock.

Diseases relating to work activities are also covered by the above regulations.

Defibrillator

There is a defibrillator for both Church and public use outside the main entrance to the Church and Halls. Instructions for use are within the device and access is obtained by dialling 999.

First Aid Training

People on the list of First Aiders will be required to renew their certificates every three years following additional training which will be arranged by the Health and Safety Officers. From time to time, others will be invited to join them and undertake the training.

6 Access for people with disabilities.

The Church and Halls have good access for people with poor mobility or in wheelchairs to the Church, Main Hall and Margaret Old Hall. However, such people may need help over the sill on the South Porch entrance to the church. Welcomers, specifically, need to be aware that people may require help when entering the church, and may welcome using one of the new chairs with arms that were introduced in 2022.

The handrails on the Foyer stairs should be checked regularly to ensure that they have not come loose. Children should be discouraged from swinging on them.

When lighting church services, consideration should be given to those with poor sight who need a brighter light to read by and to see when they move around.

7 Fire Safety

All staff and volunteers should:

- Learn the location of fire-escape doors and the safe routes to them and know where people should assemble.
- Learn the location of fire extinguishers and fire blankets and how to use them with safety.
- Ensure that **NO SMOKING** rules are observed.
- Ensure that fire doors are not left wedged open.
- Ensure that all corridors, foyers and aisles are kept clear at all times to permit the unimpeded movement of wheelchairs and to avoid interference with means of escape.
- Overcrowding should be avoided.
- On seeing a fire or smelling smoke:
 - Immediately raise the alarm.
 - Evacuate the building to the corner of Dugdale Hill Lane and Mutton Lane.
 - Always use the nearest available exit.
 - **Do not** stop to collect personal belongings.
 - **Do not** re-enter the building.
 - Call the fire brigade and other emergency services giving the post code **EN6 3AS**

- Close doors wherever possible to contain the fire.

Trained individuals can use fire extinguishers to fight the fire, if possible, without risking personal injury.

Telephones are located:

- In the Office and people should be encouraged to carry their own mobile phone

Candles

- Church candles must be extinguished, using snuffers, by the duty server, vergers or welcomers as soon as practical after any service (except the seven day candles in the Chapel in the votive candle holder and above the reserved sacrament).
- Lighters must be kept in the Clergy Vestry between services, except for the lighter which is kept in the chapel for lighting the candles daily.
- Children with candles should be under adult supervision.
- Candles should only be used with an appropriate holder.
- Children should be standing still when holding a candle and not encouraged to move about.
- Decorations to candle holders should be flame retardant.

Rubbish

To avoid a risk of fire, rubbish should not be allowed to collect and must be disposed of regularly in the wheelie bins which are located near the South Porch entrance to the Church.

8 Traffic and Parking

- People arriving at the Church and Halls by car should use the Church Car Park, approached from Dugdale Hill Lane, or park safely in the adjoining roads or in the car park at Elm Court, taking care when crossing Mutton Lane.
- Access to private properties and driveways should be left clear and no vehicles should be double parked so as to block any road or prevent access by emergency vehicles when parking in the adjoining roads.
- At all times consideration should be given to the safety and convenience of local residents.
- Pedestrians should take particular care when going to or from the car park.
- Children should be carefully supervised when near any vehicles.
- Drivers should not reverse their vehicles into Dugdale Hill Lane when leaving the Church car park or Vicarage driveway.
- Pedestrians and cyclists are advised to use the controlled crossing lights when crossing Mutton Lane.
- Bicycles should be locked to the bike rack on the left of the main entrance. They should not be left in the Foyer.
- No stopping or parking is permitted within the hatched areas of the car park; unless for short periods of time for unloading.

9 Locking up the Church and Halls.

The people designated to lock up, should ensure that before leaving the premises:

- All lights are off.
- All windows are closed and locked.
- Electrical equipment is off and unplugged (except for equipment otherwise marked and equipment on time clocks).
- Fire escape doors are closed and no fire doors are left open.
- Check all rooms and toilets are unoccupied.

Key holders leaving the premises should liaise with any other people or groups on the premises and check the notice board near the toilets to ensure that no-one is locked in to the church or left in the Halls.

10 The Personal Safety of Staff and Volunteers

Ideally no-one should be in the Halls or the Church alone (see separate Lone Working Policy for more details).

- When a member of staff or volunteer is working alone in the office, they may choose to lock the church doors and the front door or the office door.
- **Morning and Evening Prayer:** Anyone leading Morning or Evening Prayer who finds themselves alone should know that they can either lock the church door or forgo the service and return home if they feel unsafe.
- **Locking up the Church and Halls (see 9 above):** Anyone locking the Church or Halls should be advised to carry a mobile phone and turn on the lights, turning them off as they proceed in the checking process from upstairs to the halls lobby, toilets and then to the front door (or south porch door).