

## Our Parish Health and Safety Policy

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. It covers the churches of **St Mary's, Wargrave, and St Peter's, Knowl Hill, together with its mission church, St Paul's, Warren Row**, and any other premises belonging to or leased by them.

We also know that, as we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

In particular, we know that if we were to be an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. As we only employ two staff there is no obligation but in line with good practice we have drafted this policy to follow the requirements under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

There is further information at [www.ecclesiastical.com/healthandsafety](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/healthandsafety) and further guidance prepared by the Health and Safety Executive at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### 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 and others who may use the church, churchyard or any other building we are responsible for. 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.

We will appoint a member of the PCC to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. 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 We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.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 and the notes for guidance on implementation in specific aspects. A copy of it will be kept in the church and made available to others on request. A copy is also available on the church website<sup>1</sup> within [Parish Policies \[link\]](#)

Signed\*:

*D J Clark* [original signed]

\*on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at a meeting on: 25 Jan 2021

Date: 25 Jan 2021

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wargravechurch.org.uk>

## Organisation and Responsibilities

The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is:

**Doug Clark**

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.

The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy. They are:

Wargrave: **Peter Mayes**

**Ian Matthews**

Knowl Hill: **Sandra Baker**

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.
- 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.

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.

### 1. Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations.

### 2. 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.

### 3. 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. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

### 4. First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.

There are first aid boxes at St Mary's located in:

- Adjacent to the South Door entrance
- Parish Office
- The Hannen Room kitchen
- The St Mary's Church Centre kitchen
- The bell-ringing room

There is a first aid box at both St Peter's and St Pauls located by the respective main entrances.

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is:

**Doug Clark**

### 5. 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.

Our Accident Book is kept in the Parish Office

Accident report forms are located in the reception areas of all the churches. In St Mary's it covers the body of the church, the vestries and the bell-ringing room; separate report forms are sited in the Hannen Room and the St Mary's Church Centre.

All accidents and incidents in those areas and in the churchyard are to be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety, or if not available a Church Warden, (via the Church Office where appropriate) and entered on an Accident Report form and, where appropriate, our insurers advised.

The Accident Reports are retained and the accident records are to be regularly reviewed.

## 6. 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 keep records of the checks we make.

## 7. 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.

## 8. Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in the Parish Office.

## Specific Arrangements

The church website contains guidance and risk assessment templates for specific areas and are considered as supporting documents to this policy document. Please see:

[Guidance and Risk Assessment Templates \[Link\]](#) <sup>2</sup>

### 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.

### Bell Ringing

We will ensure that adequate precautions are in place to protect bellringers and others who may enter the ringing room and bell chamber. This will include any emergency evacuation procedure, a safe means of heating, the provision of fire extinguishers, the provision of emergency lighting, and the notification of safety procedures to visiting bellringers.

### Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. 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, Cemetery and Mill Green

We will ensure that boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair. We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe. Headstones, tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained. Where our churchyard is formally closed, we will report any concern to the Local Authority or Parish 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 de-

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<sup>2</sup> N.B. Login to the [church website](#) to read the documents

termine 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 appliances is maintained so as to prevent danger. 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 risks and additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

## Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will provide and maintain fire extinguishers at strategic locations in our buildings. We will provide appropriate fire training for those that have stewarding duties of other relevant duties. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

## Heating Systems

We will ensure that any oil or 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, candle oil and petrol. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking, any necessary precautions that are specified.

## 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, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste. All those that prepare and serve food will have Level 2 Food Hygiene training. The procedures for the safe operation of the St Mary's Centre Kitchen and records are set out in the manual kept in the kitchen. Storage of foodstuffs is not allowed. Assembly of food cooked elsewhere is permitted where the food preparers have been appropriately trained in food hygiene.

## 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.

## Personal safety

A security alarm covers the Parish Office/vestry area with a remote-controlled lock installed on the entrance door from the churchyard. At all times when the Parish Office is in use access through this door is to be controlled. The doors leading from this area to the church are to be kept on the lock when one person is alone in the building. The alarm is to be set whenever the rooms are vacated.

A key list is to be kept for each church covering safe keys and door keys to church premises and identifying the key holders. Keys not in personal custody will be held in a discrete location.

Our policy is to restrict the keeping and handling of cash on the premises to a minimum at all times. When cash in excess of £5,000 or valuables are removed from the premises, or are in transit, at least two able bodied persons must be in attendance at all times. This is an insurance requirement with which we must comply.

## Bell Tower Access

There is limited access to the Bell Tower and roof and the Belfry Checklist on the website gives detailed information. Where we plan to run tower tours, we will review the extant risk assessment and identify any specific precautions that are necessary. This will take account of the size of the tower, the control of movement within the tower, the number of stewards available, and the ease with which persons can safely evacuate the tower in case of emergency. We will then implement these.

## 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.

## 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.

## Document Control

This document is to be reviewed annually and amended at that time as appropriate prior to presentation to the PCC for ratification and formal signature of the Vicar.

Version 1	20 July 2009	Initial ratification by PCC
Version 2	25 Jan 2010	Ratification by PCC
	Jan 2011	Reviewed
Version 2.1	22 July 2013	Amended document ratified by PCC
Version 3	23 Mar 2015	Amended document ratified by PCC
Version 4	16 May 2016	Amended document ratified by PCC
Version 5	20 Mar 2017	
Version 6	Mar 2018	Amended and ratified by PCC 21 May 18
Version 7	Mar 2019	Amended
Version 8	Apr 2020	Amended and ratified by the PCC on 27 Apr 20
Version 9	Oct 20	Draft Amendment of Annex A and references (not issued)
Version 10	Nov 20	Total revision and reissue.